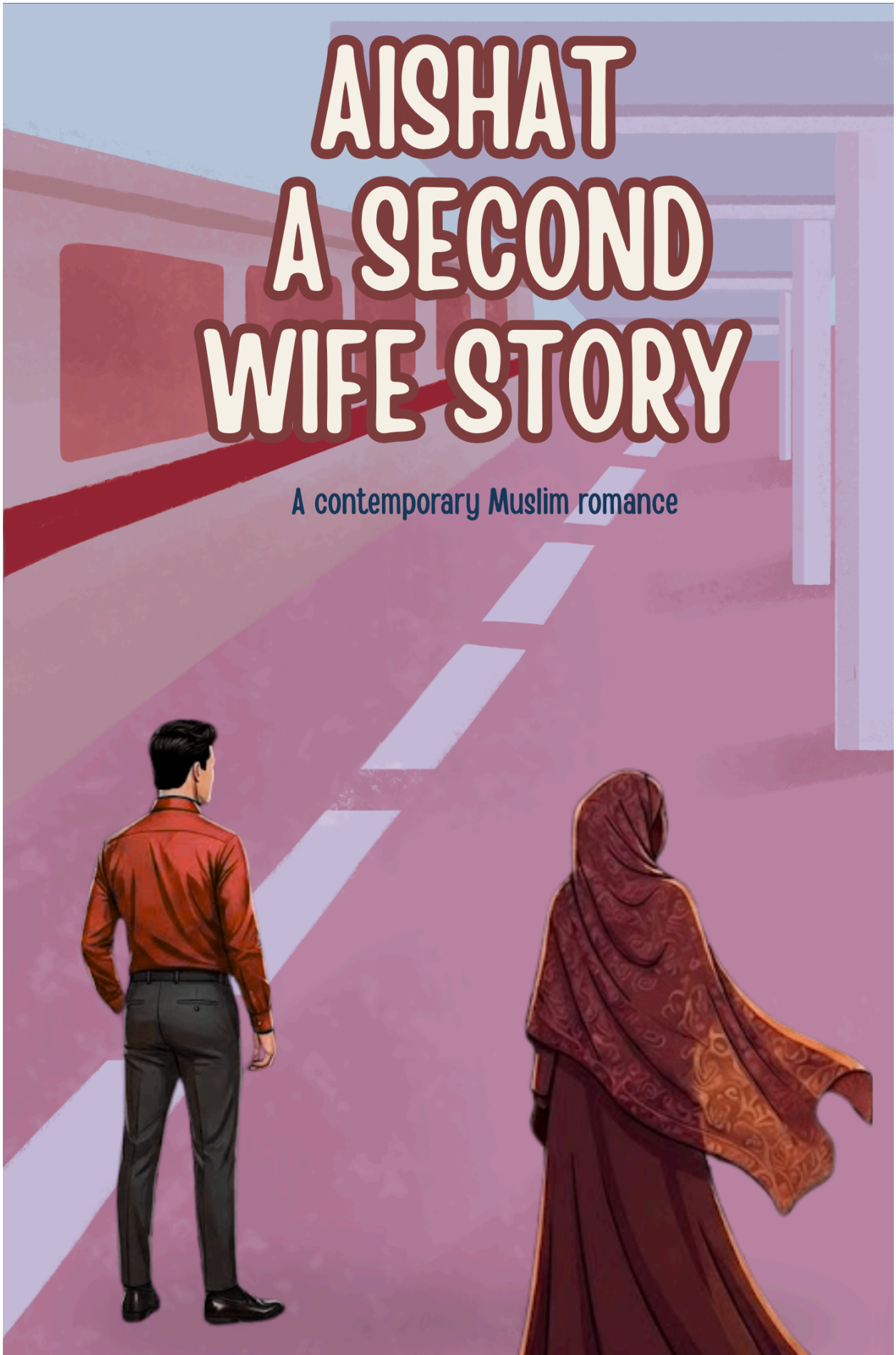
AISHAT
A SECOND
WIFE STORY
A contemporary Muslim romance

Aishat A Second Wife Story

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Dedication

To everyone who supported my writing; either by sharing, reacting, dropping reviews.
You made this possible 🌸

Acknowledgement

To God, who created me, blessed me with creativity and gave me a reason to show the world what I have.

Author's Note

I hold this book incredibly close to my heart. For a while, I had stepped away from writing, and this story was my comeback. It was the spark that reignited my passion and paved the way for Create Again, When Love Finds You, Girl, Grow, Glow,and all the other stories I will write in the future.

To my amazing people on WhatsApp—especially the community over at Zaynabwrites—you made this happen. Your likes, your shares, and your constant requests for new chapters kept me going when I was just finding my footing again.

I compiled this complete version specifically for you. Whenever you want to return to the world of Aisha and Abdul-Rahman, it is right here waiting.

Jazakumullahu khairan, and thank you for reading

CHAPTER 1

The semester had just ended, which signifies the end of my third year in school, one more year and I'm finally done.

Aishat!! , Bimpe my friend, called —running towards me , while I was seated on one of the platforms in front of a lecture hall.

"Hey" I said, adjusting the edge of my abaya as a slight breeze blew it up.

"Kamal was looking for you, I told him you left the hall earlier and he even asked me to give you this" Bimpe said, opening her back pack. "Please Bimpe,you know I don't want to talk to Kamal , talk less of collecting anything from him,I don't want to have anything to do with him again "

"Haba Aishat!!, this guy loves you and
what's causing you people's fight is just unnecessary."

"unnecessary Bimpe??, hearing this from you I'm really surprised, don't tell me you don't see anything wrong with being intimate with a man before marriage"

"There's nothing wrong with it, you are just shouting your religion does not allow it, moreover who marries a virgin these days " Bimpe replied.

I lifted my head slowly *is she for real...*

"I refuse to have this conversation with you, I will see you next semester and please return that thing to Kamal" I said pointing at the small gift box she was holding.

"But!!.....

"No buts Bimpe, it's better you return that gift ,cause I don't need it" I said walking away .

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"Otida bayii" I signalled in Yoruba telling the okada man to stop. "Nah your house be this?, the man asked in surprise.
"Yes ,this is my parent's house, " I replied, picking my luggage from the floor.

"You no suppose dey ride okada oo, your parents should send *Moto* to dey carry you from school, I sha know say this your skin looks fresh oo" he said smiling at me .
"Thank you sir,but I'm used to coming home by myself" I replied, handing two 200 notes to him.

"Okay oo , but sha be careful" he said riding away .Ignoring what he said I walked slowly to the gate, pressing the door alarm.

"Who dey there?" Alamu shouted, as I heard footsteps of him coming towards the gate. He opened the small eye hole at the gate " Ah ,Ah, aunty Aishat , Ekaaabo oooo" he shouted opening the gate. "Alamu oo, how are you?? " I smiled at him."Fine ,fine, how's school, studies? " he asked with his funny English accent .

"Alhamdulillah , we thank God " I replied, stepping into the house ,the compound was silent as usual. As if sensing my thoughts Alamu uttered" Madam don go shop, she get one goods wey dey arrive today, Alhaji self don travel since yesterday,your siblings dey inside sha"

"Oh!! , thank you Alamu let me go inside then" I said picking up my small luggage "Iro ooo!! " Alamu exclaimed, collecting my luggage. "Aunty Oyinbo shouldn't carry heavy things," he added.

I laughed loudly hearing the nickname he usually addresses me with, due to my fair skin. I looked more like a half-caste even though both of my parents are Nigerian. "But Aunty oyinbo has been the one carrying this luggage since " I teased, smiling." "Well

,Alamu was not there, but now that I'm here, no carrying of load he said walking behind me.

"It feels good to be at home!!"

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I tossed the phone aside as I noticed a message from Kamal, "that fool!!" , yawning loudly, I proceeded to pick up a book I was reading. Bimpe had recommended the book to me. Thank God it's not Romance,or else I wouldn't have bought it. I prefer smelling books than reading the soft copy, weird right?? .

Knock knock!! Salma said, popping her head through the door. Come in, although you're in already , I said rising up from my sleeping position .

Mrs Ahmad is here, she said grinning widely.
"Subhanallah, can that woman please rest!! " I said, frowning. Mrs Ahmad is my mother's best friend, they are very close that they do almost everything together , I can't believe she and mum would even think of setting me up with her son, who would marry that proud egoistic guy??, even though Abdul Rahman and my elder brother were also close friends, I hate the guy and despise him , Astagfirullah but I just don't like him.

Brother Abdul Rahman is getting married, Mrs Ahmad came to drop our clothes, Salma replied. Married?? I asked, looking surprised and happy.

"Yes , it's been going on for a while now, I mean the preparations ,the wedding is next month" Salma explain further
"Alhamdulillah, that's good news" I exclaimed excitedly

"Let's go and meet soon- to - be Iya oko" I added smiling happily.

"So you are even happy to get rid of him, mom thought you would feel bad if you got to know about it, that's why she has been hiding the wedding from you" Salma said as we walked towards the stairs .

"Well I'm sad", I shrugged making up a sad face as we step into the living room. "Aishat my dear, come here" Mrs Ahmad beckoned as she sighted me.
"You know how it is these days, we can't force young people to do what we want," she added touching my cheek.

"Yes ummu I understand " I replied as we walk to the couch to take a seat . "What do you think about this design??" Mum asked looking at me and then back at the material she was holding,I think that's the fabric choosen for the wedding.

"It's nice ,it will look good on you " Mrs Ahmad interrupted placing the blue chord on my skin. "It fits really well doesn't it dear?" She added facing my mom.

"Yes it does, I'm sure she will sow a perfect style with it " my mom replied.
"How happy I would have been if you are the one my son is getting married to, you will look good in the clothes Faizah will be wearing for the wedding "

I shifted uncomfortably,not liking where the conversation was heading to
"Faizah is the right one for Brother Abdul Rahman " I replied trying not to show how uneasy I am.

"See, I told you, Nana is a good girl she understands" my mom said smiling.
"Let me go and help Salma in the kitchen" I said standing up immediately, I have heard enough of their talk.

"Yeah, Go! Nana, (Nana was my nickname,my family and most our close friends and relatives call me that).

I sighed loudly heading for the kitchen .

Chapter 2

Abdul Rahman sat in the living room of his parent's house looking neat and handsome as usual , I didn't expect to see him there, the wedding is tomorrow and Mrs Ahmad requested we come to her house,so from there we go to the event hall where the ceremony would take place.

Salam alaykum, brother Abdul -Rahman I said trying not to look at him, Salma greeted him too.

"Wa alaykum salam, Salma and ....." He paused pretending he didn't remember my name.

I hissed loudly looking at him, he was about to say something when mom entered. Salam alaykum ummi , he said walking straight to my mom a smile plastered on his face.

"That pretender" I mumbled under my breath, to everybody Abdul - Rahman was a nice, religious and a very disciplined guy, but to me he was a total asshole!! ,since our parents brought the idea of us getting married few years back he had started behaving very stupid,and using every opportunity to showcase he had no interest in me, Alhamdulillah he's even getting married already, I'm free from the fool.

"Nana!!" I heard a voice that sounds like Abdul- Rahman's own calling my name . "So much for pretending not to know my name"

"Yes" I replied turning slowly.

"Let me help you with your bags, mom already arranged a room for you and Salma, your mum will stay in another room " he said smiling, more like a grin to me.

"Such a nice guy, Aliyah was busy today, so her son willingly volunteered to welcome us even though his wedding is tomorrow " Mum said praising him.

"Mum please.., we are here because of his wedding,don't make it look as if he's doing us a favour by coming here " I replied saying it in the most annoying way I could, not waiting for their reply I walked away but slow enough for me to see a smile plastered on Salma's face, she even gave me a thumb up.
Go girl!! , A voice in my head praised.

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I didn't see the arrogant fool until the wedding day, He stood with my elder brother and the rest of his friends dressed in agbada, mom had dragged I , Salma and my younger brother Areef to go greet him.

Salam alaykum Ya Akhi I greeted— hugging my brother ,this is the first time I have seen him in three years he hardly come home due to the nature of his work,and mostly when he does I'm always in school.

Wa alaykum salam, my diamond!! how are you? My brother said touching my cheek .
"I'm fine I replied smiling back at him"
"You look even more be...
"Nana!" Mum called interrupting my brother.

I turned slowly looking at her ,where she stood in front of Abdul- Rahman , who's now standing beside his wife his hand resting on her waist, the wife looks beautiful dressed in a Gold aso- oke attire, a matching hijab on her head, she smiles softly listening to whatever my mom was telling her.

"Come and greet the newly wedded and leave your brother alone, it's not like he's running away, mom said looking at me"
"Arrgh!!, I will talk to you later Ibrahim" I said to my brother walking away from him.

Salam alaykum, you must be Nana, you look beautiful, Faizah said looking at me, the blue chord lace that Mrs Ahmad picked for the family actually complemented my skin, and thank God my fashion designer really tried with my attire.

"Thank you Faizah, you look more beautiful and Congratulations on your wedding, May Allah bless your new home" I replied hugging her.

"Amin, Jazakhumu llahu khaeran sis" she said hugging me back.
"Congratulations, Brother Abdul- Rahman" I said not bothering myself with teslim.

"Thank you Nana!!" He replied.
Mum I think I'm done here I said walking away , Abdul-Rahman is not the only one that knows how to act uninterested, *two can play the game...*
"The decor...it's beautiful right?" Salma asked standing beside me with a cup in hand.

"Mmhm, I mumbled smiling at her.

"Dad asked you to come over , Dr Bala said it's been long he saw you "
I looked up to where she pointed, My dad stood, alongside with Abdul Rahman's father, Dr Bala, and a few his friends that I don't even recognise, they were all dressed in flowing agbada the same colour as our chord lace, I looked closely and sighted Dr Bala's first son in their midst, " is dad trying to set me up with him??"

"You know the answer already " Salma replied bringing her cup to her lips.
God knows whatever she was drinking.
Today is definitely going to be a long day.

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Salam alaykum alaykum Aishat , Kamal voice announced through the phone. I didn't know he was the one calling or else I wouldn't have picked it up .
Please Aishat!! , don't hang up please ...
three minutes he said noticing my silence.

"Three minutes and that's all" I replied moving the phone closer to my ear, my two travelling bags lay on the floor. I would be leaving for school tomorrow.

"I know I have offended you,but please you need to forgive me and let's continue with our relationship, I know what I ask from you is wrong, and as a pious Muslim it's even not accepted, we can wait till after our wedding at least you have one more year left in school then we can get married " he said in one breathe.

"Kamal, I don't know " I paused not knowing what to say , Kamal is the first guy I ever dated and seriously he has every attribute a woman need in a man, he's good looking, religious, before he left school he was a member of MSSN , he is intelligent, and even has a well paid job, if not for what happen recently, Kamal has never given me any reason to doubt him

.

"Please Aishat, I won't give you any reason to ever hate me again" he said as if he was in my thoughts.

"Okay I will think about it ,but don't think I will accept you back" I replied

. "You will, I will give you every reason to, will you be at your hostel tomorrow?, I should take you out ?"

"Well!, yeah I will be coming back tomorrow, that's if I'm not tired from the journey " I reply honestly, using my free hand to grab my blanket.

"Then let's wait till tomorrow for your answer"

"Good night butterfly " He uttered.

I blushed slightly, that was his nickname for me and he always says it in a way that makes my heart leap up.

"Good night Kamal."

CHAPTER 3

Rofiat , my roommate,lay comfortably on her bed looking at me with an expression I couldn't explain, after I drop my call with Kamal.

"I thought you were done with Kamal?" She asked not trying to hide her annoyance. "Rofiat please" I said not liking where the conversation was leading too.

Rofiat is jovial and all ,but when it comes to things that go against our religion she becomes something else, and I'm not ready tonight for a long sermon of why I should stay away from Kamal.

"Sha be careful, I don't trust the guy" she said calmly. "I will, and I have God and you, nothing will go wrong" I replied smiling at her.

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Class has ended for the semester and everyone was busy preparing for the forth coming exams, I was in the library reading for my first paper when my phone rang.

Everyone glanced at me as the phone ringing tone buzzed out loudly with my favourite Nasheed, I rushed outside giving everyone an "I'm sorry" look. It's unlike me to forget to mute my phone , it's never going to happen again, I muttered, picking the call.

"What's never going to happen again?" My brother asked he was the one calling.

"strange"

"Salam alaykum Ya Akhi, I was in the library when you called and my phone was not on mute” "I'm sorry , diamond,I didn't know , I chose a wrong time to call" he said sounding guilty.

"No oo, it's my fault,I should have put my phone on silent, this one you called I hope everything is okay?" I joked even though I was eager to hear whatever he had to say.

"Everything is fine Nana, you worry too much, I visited our parents yesterday with my fiance and you know we will be going to her parent's house next week " He said waiting for my reply .

"Oh my God that's good news oo, Congratulations, you have left the single lives for us " I replied smiling .

"As if you won't come home and tell us you want to get married in few years, I know you "
I laughed loudly, my mind going towards Kamal , he was right actually.

"Okay, let me hang up, I don't want to disturb your reading," he said, breaking the silence.
"Alright, Ibrahim. Ma salam"

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First semester exam ended so quickly as if it never happened. I found myself for the second time this year in a public transport bus taking me to Oyo, my school was situated in Lagos, and one of the best private universities in Nigeria.

"I was seated by the window side, enjoying the breeze that blows into my face , Ibrahim would be getting married in few weeks, and all the preparations for his wedding has started"
The lady sitting beside me tapped me and then I realised the bus had come to a halt , we are in Oyo.

"Thank you ma'am " I muttered while strolling beside her to get down from the bus.
Unlike Abdul-Rahman who lived and was based in Oshogbo, my brother stays in Abuja , I believe he would be home to help in the preparation.

Waving at a bike, I dropped my big travelling box on the seat and proceeded to climb it slowly.

"Easy ma'am, we are not in a hurry" the bike man uttered in fluent English. I shifted my attention from my box to stare at him
"Thank you , I'm just tired, I don't know why, " I replied, smiling and marveling at his English.

As we rode out of the garage into the main road I was curious and asked "Are you a student or what?"

"Yes and No" he replied, pausing . I guess he was reluctant to share any information with me.
"I finished secondary school last year, I'm working so I can go to higher institution"

"Oh!, what about your parents I asked?" It was unusual of me to talk to strangers,but for a reason it felt normal talking to this one.
His hand gripped the handle of the bike tightly, I watched his movement silently "my parents, both of them are dead, I live with my aunt"

"I'm sorry to hear that, " I said . "It's fine " he replied and for the rest of the ride we didn't say anything.

"Here" I said, motioning him to stop when we reached my house. "This is beautiful, " he complimented looking at the house. "What's your name?" I asked, looking at him.
"Farid ma" he replied, starting his bike.

"I might be able to help you, my dad runs a scholarship organisation, call me if you are interested " I said scribbling my number on a piece of paper.

"Thank you ma" he replied smiling at me
"It's nothing, have a nice day Farid and make sure you call" I said, turning my back and walking to the gate.

"I didn't hear any reply from him, I was about to step into the compound,when the engine of his bike roared" he left.

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Yawning loudly , I stretched my hand to take my phone from the bed drawer. The time was exactly 4:00 am. A few minutes before Subhi prayer, I was feeling thirsty and I stood up immediately from the bed walking to the living room.

The house was silent, very unusual, after the announcement of my brother's wedding,my house had become a bustling place , with visits from families, friends and well wishers, I have lost track of the number of people that visited, the wedding was to happen tomorrow and we are to travel to Abeokuta for the wedding- that was the home town of the wife.

"Few of our family members already arrived, we will all be leaving for Abeokuta today, to lodge in one of dad friend's hotel"

The living room was dark ,I was not interested in switching ON the light,I just had to take a bottle of water and go back to my room, and I didn't want anyone to see me dressed in my night gown ,my lower thigh was visible and I was only wearing a head bonnet.

"Closing the fridge slowly and turning to walk back I bumped into a hard chest" this was not Dad or Ibrahim's perfume ,then who ? I asked, trying to recognise the face of the person since it's dark.

The person moved slowly, looking for the switch , standing in front of me was Abdul-Rahman dressed in a shirt that didn't hide his physique, and shorts.

He looked at me with an amused expression on his face then I remembered what I was wearing.

"Subhanallah, what are you doing here?" I asked rudely.

"Well, this is my house as well as yours and I'm the groom's best friend," he replied, not moving away from where he stood.

"You have a wife, and you are supposed to be with her in your parent's house, don't tell me you slept here" I said.

"Well, you are not my wife, and she understands, " he replied, looking at me.

"Fine, have a nice day " I replied, trying to walk away.

He moved very fast from his position and stood in front of me.

"Are you still angry that I married Faizah instead of you?" He asked, looking straight into my eyes.

I laughed softly "you wish?" , "there was nothing between us, our mum's were just being delusional, thank God you actually found her, I can't imagine getting married to you " I added.

"I should have married you " he said laughing, but I saw something like regrets in his eyes

"Does he have problems with Faizah?" I asked myself as I entered my room.
"Whatever, that's none of my business" I mumbled.

CHAPTER 4

Few weeks after my brother's wedding, I was with Bimpe at my faculty pavilion,engrossed with the movie I was watching
She nudged me on the shoulder, looking up from my phone I followed her gaze as it fell on Kamal, who was walking towards us, dressed in a Blue shirt and Black trouser.

"Salam alaykum" I greeted as he hugged me , my body froze under his touch,I was not used to all this public affection.
"Walaykum salam butterfly," he replied, kissing my forehead before moving back.
"Let me start going,and leave you two love birds to do your thing" Bimpe said, giving me a wink and walking away.

"How are you? I didn't know you were coming" I said, turning to Kamal,who was busy playing with the hem of my hijab.

"You look good," he said, ignoring my statement.
"Let's go butterfly ,we are going on a date " he added pulling me towards him.
I drawled back immediately, coughing to cover my uneasiness.

"I didn't know we were going out, you should have informed me" I said looking at him.
"Are you saying you don't want to go out with me?" Kamal asked. I noticed a hint of sadness in his voice.
"No oo, I was just saying I'm not prepared, I don't know if I'm dressed properly for a date" I replied.
"Don't worry Aishat, you look good, let's go" he said, holding my hands as we walked to his car.

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I distracted myself with picking my nails, as I listened to what mother was saying on the phone,Mrs Ahmad was worried because Faizah is not pregnant yet, and it's been a year already .
"Mom, it's God that gives children oo, ummu should calm down" I replied after listening to her long explanation of all the bla bla stuff.

"That's what I told Aliyah too too, I think my marriage was up to a year before I gave birth to your brother, " mom explained.
"See ,so she better calm down, how's dad doing,is he home these days?" I asked.

"Yes oo, I'm happy he's even resting,cause travelling almost every two days, he's getting old, soon he will start having grandchildren " my mom replied laughing.
"Grandpa ti de niyen" I joked back in Yoruba.
"Abi oo, don't let me disturb you, later dear " she said.

Alright ma, *ma salam* I replied as a notification message from Rofiat popped in.
opening the message ,a picture of Kamal standing with a lady stared back at me, the lady was dressed in a short fitted gown with a scarf tied on her head, compared to the big abayas I wore,the girl had nice curves and the gown hugged her perfectly .
"How can I stand against this one?" I mumbled under my breath as tears trickled down my face.

"I'm coming home now" another message from Rofiat came in,I glanced at the picture once again,and more tears fell.
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Is everything okay?? "I heard Rofiat say as she opened the door to our room.
"Yeah , I'm here to see Aishat , Kamal said he hasn't been picking her call for two days and I messaged her too but she didn't reply " the person by the door announced it was Bimpe.

"Aunty , you can't enter oo, and please Aishat is not a baby if she is ready to pick your calls she will" Rofiat replied sounding irritated and angry.

"Please oo, you know I'm only being civil with you because you are my friend's roommate, like you said Aishat is not a baby,let her decide if she wants to see me or not" Not wanting a fight to start between the two, I quickly picked a scarf from the hanger and walked to the door.

Rofiat was holding the door looking at Bimpe as if she's ready to pounce on her anytime from now.
"Hey Bimpe, " I said, smiling a little.
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"It's a lie, the person that sent this is a liar" Bimpe shouted.

After I stepped in before her and Rofiat ripped themselves apart this morning, she sat on my bed listening to the whole reason why I didn't pick up Kamal's call and showing her the picture to back it up.

"Bimpe please!!, how can you now explain the reason why they were together" I asked looking at her with an expression I can't even explain.
"What's wrong with a lady and a man having lunch, moreover Kamal has a job, how are you sure it's not job related" Bimpe explained.
"Don't listen to her," Rofiat said, interfering in our conversation for the first time.

"What's your business, am I talking to you?" Bimpe voiced back, ready to fight with my roommate.
"You people should please stop, all this cat and rat vibes going between the two of you" I don't like it.

"She started it first," Bimpe mumbled, rolling her eyes.

"Well they are only having lunch??" Rofiat said, bringing her phone up to my face, on the screen again where Kamal and the lady were holding hands and smiling.
"Wait, don't tell me she snapped the pictures?" Bimpe said standing up
"Yeah she did,what happened?" I replied.

"And you believed her, can't you see she's just trying to ruin your relationship. She never supported it in the first place, bad belle!!" Bimpe accused.

"Subhanallah!!, did you just say I'm jealous of my sister's relationship, is this one okay?, if anybody should be jealous it should be you, cause where Aishat is a ten you are one, and where she's rated one you are nothing " Rofiat shouted her anger showing in her voice.

"You fool, if I was jealous of Aisha would I have done everything in my power to make her and Kamal reconcile" Bimpe shouted ba ck.
"Yeah, you could have been jealous of her, but you can't do anything because Kamal doesn't like you ,you are not his type,just take a look at you" Rofiat replied calmly this time making a point.

Bimpe stepped back looking as if she was about to cry, her big tummy showing in the tight gown she wore.
"I'm sorry" Rofiat said, realising what slipped out.

Picking up her abaya to wear hurriedly,she took her phone and left.

After the door closed behind her ,Bimpe sat on the floor crying heavily. "Oh my God Bimpe, I'm sorry, you don't have to cry, she didn't mean anything she said" I said trying to pacify her.

Even I wouldn't dare to step on Rofiat's nerves,cause she herself knows the gravity of her words when angry.

Chapter 5

Looking at Kamal standing in front of my hostel, dressed in a grey top and black jeans , all the hate I've gathered for him these past few days left.
"Aishat" he began ,his hands in his pocket. I looked at his face, noticing the dark circles under his eyes, my heart leapt up with excitement- I guess I'm not the only one in pain.

"I'm sorry, I don't know what I did wrong but please forgive me" he said making a slow movement with his hands coming towards my face I shifted back immediately.

I looked at my feet, trying not to get convinced easily "you don't know what you did Kamal??" I asked, staring into his black eyes.
I know Bimpe well, she's likely to've told Kamal something,if not, he won't be apologising when I was clearly the one ignoring him.
"Bimpe told me the picture.... " He paused to my annoyance.
"Please Kamal, I don't have all day" I said, getting angry.

"You should have asked me, you just ignored me for no reason , you should remember Safeerah" He said, bringing out his phone from his pocket. I watched him eagerly.
A picture of a woman dressed in a black straight gown, staring back at me. The dress hugging the right place on her body ,with a blue scarf tied on her head, *I think she prefers scarves to hijab*.
"That's Safeerah, she's the daughter of my mom's best friend," Kamal said.

"So??, is she forbidden to you ?" I asked, ignoring the voice in my head telling me Kamal was telling the truth.
"I already told you about her before, she's like a sister to me, she came to Lagos for something,and I have seen her last, it's been years.You know I love you butterfly, and no one can make me stop loving you" He replied pulling me towards him.

I didn't argue or move back,I hugged Kamal ,call me foolish or stupid, I love Kamal a lot.
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My phone rang loudly " my favourite Nasheed buzzing from it ,my brother's name popped on the screen I pressed the green button putting the phone closer to my ears.

"My Diamond" he said, a hint of excitement in his voice.

I smiled. This was the first time,my brother forgot to do teslim , this better be worth it.
"Salam alaykum ya Akhi, I guess you are in a good mood" I replied, teasing him.

He laughed loudly "walaykum salam, am I not supposed to be in a good mood??, a soon-to-be father" he said the excitement still in his voice.
"Really?, Sister Kareemah is pregnant, Masha Allah" I squeaked loudly ignoring the side eye Rofiat was giving me. We have not been on good terms since she discovered I forgave Kamal.
"Yeah, she is ,since you are my first love, I decided you will be the first to hear the news" He replied.
"Congratulations, so you haven't told Dad and mom yet?First love, hmm??, and you left me to get married?" I asked, teasing him.

"Not yet, I will call them after I'm done talking to you, it's not compulsory you marry your first love,you just won't forget them easily " My brother replied I know this conversation was not about him and I anymore, not wanting to spoil his mood I changed the conversation.
"Better get ready oo, being a father is not easy - retie your trousers " I said remembering the Yoruba term my parents use when they are telling you to be prepared.
A loud laughter erupted from Ibrahim " please, don't start today"
"I won't , thank God you are calling them, I can't wait for Mom and Dad to counsel you" I replied with an amused grin on my face.
"True, I will just tell them I'm at work and I will call them later "

"Okay oo, congratulations once again "
"Thank you Nana, we will talk later"
"Ma salam"
Yeah Ma salam

"sitting down on my bed I remembered Faizah immediately, how would Mrs Ahmad react if she hears my brother's wife is pregnant."
"This is going to be an interesting week " I mumbled yawning loudly.
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Final year week was a blast, I stood with Bimpe alongside three of my course mates dressed in matching Ankara attire, it was the last day of our final year week.
"You look more like a Hausa with this your style " Zeenah, one of my coursemates, complimented.
"I'm telling you, you will think she's Fulani,almost looking like an Arab self, " Bolu added.
"You people should stop teasing me too" , I said smiling softly.

"Who's teasing you, it's the truth !!" Bimpe said .
"Are you guys going to pose, or you want to continue talking? " Ayomide said, standing in front of us with an iPhone in hand.
"Sorry oo, but is it a crime to admire ourselves before we snap" Bolu said.

"It's not oo, but I have a lot to do other than watching you people admire you, it's like you don't need the pictures" Ayomide replied.
"We don't need what?, please snap me , I'm ready" Zeenah shouted,she is popular on Instagram, so I understand the need for her to take a picture.
"Styles by Zeenah, you better calm down," Bolu joked, calling her by her Instagram username.
I laughed loudly looking at them ,my laugh dried immediately,as I saw Abdul-Rahman walking towards us dressed in a native attire.

"Maybe I'm going nuts," I said, rubbing my eyes.
What's the problem? Bimpe asked.
"I don't know, am I the only one seeing that man coming toward us?" I asked Bimpe, she didn't know Abdul-Rahman that well and I didn't want to go into details.
"You mean that handsome guy," she said, looking towards the direction where he was walking from.
"Who's that? " Zeenah said ,she was staring at Abdul-Rahman too.

"That's a fine guy we have here, he doesn't even look like a student," Bolu added.
"He's not handsome and he's not a student" I said, getting angry at their compliments.
They stared back at me with an expression asking if I was blind, I would never agree with anybody that Abdul-Rahman was handsome.
"He's not, " I said, trying not to look at him.

"Well he's coming here, towards you to be precise " Zeenah said looking at me.
"Salam alaykum Nana" Abdul Rahman greeted with his deep voice, ignoring my friends.
"Abdul -Rahman!!, you remember my name today, walaykum salam " I replied looking at him.
"Do you guys know each other? " Zeenah asked, looking at me .
"Yeah, he's my br.....
"I'm her friend, Abdul-Rahman said cutting me off...very close friend" he added smirking.
"Oh my God, you didn't tell us you have handsome friends oo" Bolu replied.
"Exactly" Bimpe confirmed.

"Please, I will talk to you guys later" I said walking away, Abdul -Rahman following me closely, my friend's compliment was already annoying me,and I would probably lose my cool anytime soon.
"What are you even doing here?" I asked after we were far away from earshot.
"Can't I come to your school again?, I'm only here because mum said it won't look good if I'm in Oyo and I don't visit you " Abdul-Rahman replied not hiding the fact that he didn't come to greet me on his own accord.

"Well you should have told her "NO" ,instead of coming here with a flimsy excuse " I replied giving him a stern gaze .

"Nana Aishat" he chuckled softly, we are not here to fight are we?? Abdul Rahman asked, moving closer towards me.
"Why should I waste my time fighting with you?" I replied, stepping back .
"Better, I think I'm done here, have a nice day" he said, giving me a dark smile before walking away.

"Buffoon!!" I mumbled, looking at his back as he walked away.
How can he be so arrogant??, a notification buzzed through my phone dissuading my thoughts,clicking on it I found a credit alert.
"Credit Alert:100,000 transferred to you from Rahman -Ahmad"
I hissed loudly looking at the message he sent afterwards

"Spend the money wisely, and I'm not a buffoon"

To hell with him and the money, Did I ask him for money
"Spend the money wisely my foot!!" I typed pressing the send button.

Chapter 6

Few weeks to the commencement of our exams, the last one I'm going to have in the University, I felt happy and scared at the same time, from 100 level I had maintained my first class up to this point,I pray nothing goes wrong.

I stand up immediately staring down at the mess I made on my mattress, my book were scattered all over it, my bedsheets was ruffled and half of the sheet was covering the mattress. picking up my book one by one ,I proceeded to start arranging it on my reading table, my phone buzzed out loudly, I turned around trying to locate where the sound was coming from.
The phone lay under one of my books, hissing from annoyance , I pressed the green button, waiting for the caller to talk.

"Hello" A man's voice said, replaying it in my head it sounds more like a boy.
"Salam alaykum" he added again before I could reply, probably changing his mind.
"Wa alaykum salam" I said eager to know who was calling.

"This is Farid, that you gave your number to" He replied.
"I didn't give my number to anybody, maybe you are calling the wrong person " I muttered, I hardly give my number to people, and if I do , I'd remember right...

"Is this not Sis Aishat?, that I carried few months ago from the garage, I'm Farid you asked me to call you if I need help " He said more calmly.
"Oh my God, Farid!!!" I exclaimed my memory jolting back in place, I can remember vividly I was marveled by his fluent English that day.

"You didn't call me afterwards, were you not interested in the scholarship " I asked.
He went silent for a while I can hear the sound of bike in the background, meaning he's probably working.
"Are you on your bike?" I asked not wanting to distract him while working.

"No that was one of my colleague, I'm at the garage, I'm done for today so I will probably go home "
"Probably?" I repeated.
"Yeah" he went silent again.

"Farid is there any problem,if there's talk to me, do you prefer we meet in person?"I offered, I don't even know why I'm so much interested in his business.
"Will you have time??, you should be preparing for your exams right?" He said.

"Yeah, but you are not preparing for any exams, you can come to Oyo, I will send the transport money to you " I replied.
He went silent again, probably he would say "No"

"Okay, when should I come?" he said, I noticed some kind of excitement in his voice.
"Tomorrow will do, I will send the money now"
"Thank you..... I'm really grateful "

"Don't thank me yet Farid, let's meet tomorrow first" I replied, remembering the look he gave me that day, the boy was definitely going through a lot .

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Farid came as promised, dress in a faded yellow top and black trousers, the trouser less faded than the top, he looked more thinner than the last time I saw him, but he managed to still look good.

"Salam alaykum" he said walking towards me and touching his hair awkwardly.
"Wa alaykum salam Farid, I thought you won't want to come" I replied staring back at him.
He removed his hand from his hair, putting it back in his pocket "I wanted to change my mind at the last minute, at least I can use that money to eat " he replied giving me a weird smile.

"Hmm, I'm happy you are here, I'm taking us to the beach , that's the best place to talk well , don't you think?" I asked smiling back at him.
"Any place is fine, as long as it's what you want " he replied.

"Let's go , we don't have all day "
Farid stood at the same spot,not making an effort to move.
"Are you afraid I'm going to do something to you??, or what's it?"

He looked at me, with an expression I couldn't explain, shaking his head slightly he burst into laughter , this one more real than the fake smile he has been giving me.

"I have seen a lot, so there's nothing to be scared of, and moreover you are a girl, what would you possibly do?" He replied walking towards me .

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I placed my hand on my mouth trying hard not to scream, a tear dropping from my eye.
"Why are you crying" Farid asked looking back at me.

"It's just a few mark, , I don't even feel the pain, the only thing that make me sad was all the money I lost" he added.

"Your Aunt did this to you??, did she even have any children " I asked.

"She has a young boy, he's still in secondary school, he treats him well if that's why you asked , Aunt Morake would never raise a hand on her son, she loved him to that extent "

"Hmm okay " I said nodding my head.

"Few days after you gave me your number , I deliberated on calling you or not , but I decided against it, one thing I have learnt is not being a burden to anyone...
"You are not being a burden, it's a scholarship, it's my dad way of helping the community " I muttered.

He gave me a smile "you won't understand, after my parent's death and I was left alone, I become a burden to everyone, my Dad had no other siblings, except for my aunt, my parents death hit me badly, I was in Jss2 , it was bad and unexpected, a car accident and they died on spot, I swear by Allah's name, they promised to return home ..... " Farid paused, tears dropping from his eyes, I looked back at him with my own teary eye, I can't imagine my parents not being alive.

"I'm sorry , I know they are in better place, you need to be strong, Allah has great plans for you" I said placing my hand on his shoulder.

He nodded calmly, placing his hand on the mat we sat on ,his eyes staring back at the ocean, he continued.....

"My mom's family, they never acknowledged my dad, he was probably too poor and not good for their daughter, well the fact that they died in a public transport even added to it, they still claim up till today that my Dad killed my mom—to them she would have been alive if dad had a private car."

" I was alone, Aunty Morake had her own issues with her husband then, so she couldn't take me in , I had to start living with my Grandma "

"She tried her best, she was an old woman who was meant to sit back and enjoy her old age, my Dad was the one caring for her, and now that he's dead, she had to go back to farming"

"We wake up early morning on weekends, going to the market with the little we harvested from the farm, during the week days I attend school in the morning and in the afternoon I hawk "owowo" , my Grandma made them.

-owowo (a local Yoruba snack made with boiled corn and coconut, a little bit of sugar added to it).

"Death struck again, this time around it took my Grandma, I was in SS1 then, it was expected,Mama was old and with the farm work she do to feed herself and I , she probably would have died anytime soon." Farid paused again, stopping to pick a sea shell from the ground.

"It looks like a fish" he said bringing it closer for me to see.
"Yeah, that's the fin, I said pointing towards the edge of the sea shell.
"To think I'm now craving pepper soup" he said laughing softly.

"I think they should sell around here, let's go" I said standing up from the mat, dusting the back of my skirt.
"You don't know how happy I am to finally talk to someone" Farid said,this time walking beside me.

"You know what they say, A problem shared is a problem solved"

Chapter 7

"I needed that pepper soup, to think it's been long I ate it" Farid said.
"I still ate one, few weeks ago" I replied. - my bowl of pepper soup, looking full as if I had never touched it.

"That explains, why you still have that in front of you" Farid chuckled pointing at my bowl.
“Exactly , back to your story.... you have to leave before 4pm, so you can return to Oyo early.

" Odanpe ibi ni ma sun si oo , I don't even feel like going back " Farid joked.

I laughed loudly, looking back at him, "your dialect is funny"
"If you say so, cause that's how everyone back in Oyo talks, except if your own is different" he replied.
"I only spent my holidays in Oyo I attended boarding school throughout my secondary school days " I explained

"Oh that explains it" He replied nodding his head.
"Aunty Morake... " He added staring back at me, I gave him a go ahead nod.
" She took me in after Grandma died, first week at her place was hell, she would wake me up in the morning to mix flour for puff puff which she sells at the Garage where her husband sells ticket to bus drivers, after making puff puff, I would cook for the whole house , bathe for her son and then proceed to take him to school before I headed for mine.

His school was far from mine, but Aunty doesn't care, we will take keke to Demi's school, and from there I would walk back to my own school, first semester in SS2 I was punished everyday for coming late,one time I complained to Aunty Morake, she beat the hell out of me . - "how is it my problem that you go to school late, how many work am I even giving you, if you want to go to school early, wake up early" she had shouted that day.

Then that was what I did, I wake up as early as 3:00, mix flour for puff puff , cook for the whole house and take Demi her son to school early, I make it to my own school before assembly time . Everything was going fine and Aunty Morake started increasing the quantity of food she gave me, on random days she would even give me money, I was hoping everything would get better, until she started having problems with her Husband —Uncle Gbenga, he would come home drunk at night and beat the hell out of Aunty Morake.

The beating would have been less,if Aunty Morake was quiet , but Nooooo!!, she would continue to abuse her husband,raining curses on him, I suffered the most ,after getting a good beating from her husband,she will proceed to transfer all her anger on me, even stopped giving me food, as far as Demi ate, every other person was none of her business.

Uncle Gbenga become worse , to the extent that he now started hitting me anytime I interfered to stop their fight, Demi would stand at a corner crying profusely- poor boy!!!, Aunty Morake decided she had enough, and one day before Uncle Gbenga returned home she left the house, taking Demi and I along.

I exhaled loudly looking at Farid, I guess that's why he had a cold expression the first time I met him, he has really been through a lot.

"We started living alone, Aunty Morake puff puff business could not sustain us, so I had to start working too, I was working as a sales boy in one Igbo man shop, he sells building material."
"The man loved me a lot, because I was hardworking,and I had never stolen his money , I was already preparing for my WAEC, he allows me to read at the shop, so far I'm not idle with my work."

"I learnt a lot from him, even deciding maybe I should venture into his business once I finish school, as a sales boy I earned a lot more than you can imagine, Aunty Morake didn't even see me as a burden anymore, she will cook for us in the morning, leave food for me before I go to work in the afternoon, and advice me.

"Good things were not meant to last in my life, I knew that day, when my boss found out a large sum of money was missing from his drawer, since I was the last person who opened it and the only sales boy left in shop, all fingers pointed at me."

My boss had looked at me that day probably pitying me
" Farid tell me where you kept the money, I won't punish you, I know you are a good boy and you won't have stolen the money if there was no reason "
"I didn't reply, did I steal any money?" I asked myself.

- well they didn't believe, and I found myself being dragged out of my boss's shop , everyone looked at me with pity and contempt, some even shouting thief, I didn't argue or say anything, since I know I didn't stole what wasn't mine.

"I was taken to a Police station, a more better option than being beaten to death by the Market men and women, my boss was a good man, and I know he still had faith in me."

"Ole-oshi" the police man at the desk said , hitting my head.
I held my head, pain vibrated through my body, I would never forget that day. Farid said his voice cracking.

if there was one thing I learnt today, it was that Farid was use to pain and know how to hide it, from his little narration my face was already covered in tears, my pepper soup staring back at me, I can't bring myself to eat anything, this was too much for me

"Maybe I should stop, I don't want anyone pitying me" He said.
"No !!, please don't stop" I said giving him a forced smile.
He nodded and continued.....
I was locked up, for how many hours I didn't even know, I only remembered Aunty Morake came, she felt no pity for me and even told me to provide the money or I rot there, I hadn't expected much from her, but being my only family, she should have at least believe me,or even fake it

Hope came at the last minute,I had used almost up to 24 hrs in cell.
"Come out, kid" the police man who had hit my head yesterday beckoned,he was smiling at me this time.
"What happened?" I asked.
"I guess , God doesn't want the innocent to be punished.

"Here!!, he shoved my shirt into my hands"
When I walk out, my boss stood there, his first son standing beside him a disturbed look on his face.
"Farid I'm really sorry, I know you wouldn't have stolen that money, here's the culprit he said pointing at his son"

"I'm sorry" Caleb—his son mumbled looking back at me.
"I guess I'm free right??, I asked not even acknowledging their apology "

"Yes! Yes!!, you are free and you can resume work from next week " my boss confirmed.
I nodded ,not giving them any reply I walked away, that was the last time I saw both of them, I didn't return to shop neither did I try working again, I stopped talking with my aunt,she didn't bother making an effort to talk to me ,since I was not eating her food and spending her money.

"I finished secondary school that year , I decided immediately that I was going to further my education, my result was good but it would have been better if not for all the problems surrounding me " that was when I met Sir Kamoru, he was one of the elderly men in the garage where I work now , he was once a driver but now he rents keke, bus, bike, and buses to young ones like me" .
I didn't even know how to ride anything, but I still approached him telling him my plans and why I wanted to start riding okada.

Sir Kamoru, God bless the man for me, he was happy with my request, and that I needed the money to attend school Fariidi !! he would call, adding an extra "I" to my name, first month of working with him, I gave him 40% of my money to him everyday.

The second month he reduced it to 30% , the man liked me a lot, I had never for once crashed his motorcycle "Fariidi, o kare laaye" he would commend in Yoruba when I hand over the key to his bike and the money to him everyday.
He stopped collecting money from me everyday and instead asked me to only give him whatever I feel like every month" Farid stopped, ... laughing loudly.

"Can you believe that the first few month I calculated 30% of his money everyday and gave him the total amount" he said looking back at me.

"The man would definitely be shocked, your level of honesty is high" I replied.

"He was beyond shocked oo ,
 " Fariidi, ti mo si so fun o *" he exclaimed in Yoruba, he divided the money into three , took one part and handed the rest to me " owo ile-iwe re ni, toju re daadaa" I prostrated and thanked him that, that was the third person that treated me well after my parents died.

"I guess I would be the fourth person" I interrupted looking at him.
"I guess so, he replied smiling at me.
I kept all the money in my bag, a silly mistake I made and I regretted, AHH !! It was last week, I had come home after work, walking to my room, the house was quiet,but I thought my aunt went out with her son, walking to my room all the money I earned was gone

I flipped all my clothes away from my bag I dipped my hand inside it ,hoping the money was stuck, Sis Aishat I didn't find any money, all my sweat for a year was gone.

Walahi, I cried. I stood, rooted at the same spot for more than three minutes, rushing back to my aunt's room, all her belongings was gone, she had ran away with her son and my money.
"Subhanallah!!" I exclaimed you mean your sister stole all that money? , "she is very wicked" I added.

"Very wicked" He replied.

"That's how I ended up here, back to square one, thank God I saved your number on my phone" Farid added.
"Alhamdulillah, I'm happy you reached out to me, I will call my dad , he would be happy to help you" I said smiling.
"I would be grateful if he could help, I don't have any where to go, unless I don't want to attend school this year "

He will help you, this time around, I promise you won't ever have any reason to cry again.

Chapter 8

I was busy throughout the week that followed after Farid visited, I had a discussion about him with my dad, and Farid himself visited him at home, they are already working his admission into UNILAG , Since he had a lot of memories in Oyo, mostly the bad ones, changing environment was the best for him.

"Best of luck" he had sent to me this morning, an emoji followed, that was the only way we communicated for the past few weeks.

"Thank you Farid" I texted back to him, dropping my pen into my totes bag, I had form the habit of not going to school with my phone during exam, so I make sure I reply all my messages before going to school.
"Still here??" Rofiat asked emerging from the bathroom.

"I'm not late now, I still have an hour to my exam" I replied giving her a smile.
"One hour or 30 minutes, before you get to school that one hour will turn to 30, Aishat please leave , getting late to exam hall on your first paper is not a good sign" she explained sitting down on her bed.

"Ayy !! Ayy!!, captain, I'm out!!" I joked picking my bag and walking to the door.

"Best of luck oo" she shouted after me.

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"Salam alaykum butter fly, come here" Kamal said hugging me as we stepped into his apartment.
"Walaykum salam, are you that eager to see me" I teased.

"Of course, it's not easy having a beauty like you visit my house" He replied smiling, his dimple showing clearly.
"Are you cooking?" I asked plopping on one of the seats in his living room.

He laughed shaking his head " I was going to surprise you with that, but I guess it's not a surprise anymore"
"Well I'm surprised, the almighty Kamal cooking, it's going to rain definitely" I joked.

"Anything for you butterfly " Kamal replied winking at me .

Kamal cooked spaghetti with fish, one of my favourite meal, for a guy he cooked so well , " I think I should take you in as my personal chef I joked " after eating.
"Well , it would be my pleasure" he had replied.
For the rest of the day we sat on the sofa watching a new Nigerian movie that was just released, we maintained distance between each other, using two pillows as pillars , the only time we talked was when we make comment and we avoided looking into each other eyes.
Kamal must have expected us to cuddle or something, but I wouldn't dare risk that, I make sure I didn't make a move to shift towards him, even after the movie ended.

"That was interesting" he had commented trying to move towards me.
"Yeah it was, I replied."
"Let's take you home, it's late" he said, maybe he is really trying to wait until we marry.
"I stood up picking my bag, thanks for hosting me it was amazing the food and everything" I commended.

"It's nothing butterfly, I can do better than that" he said softly, my heart doing a back flip.
Snapping out of whatever was taking over my body I voiced out "let start going, I don't want to get Rofiat worried."

"Yeah , yeah " he mumbled picking his car keys from the table.

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I yawn loudly looking at the time, 7:57, it's not even late and I'm already feeling sleepy, rubbing my eyes ,I returned back to reading, I was about to stifle a second yawn when my phone rang.

My dad name displayed on my screen, he hardly call me and when he does, it's important.
"Nana!, Salam alaykum" he greeted immediately I picked the call.

"Walaykum salam dad"
"Your mom said you have started your exam" he said.
"Yes, since last week I have three papers left" I replied.
"Alhamdulillah, I hope you you are reading, and there's no problem right??" He asked.

"Yes sir , everything is fine , Alhamdulillah"
"Okay, Good night, best of luck, May Allah increase your knowledge" he prayed softly.
"Amin, Good night.... The call went off before I could finish, trust my dad , he never waste time in a conversation.

My phone rang again and this time my mom, she must have waited for my dad to call me first.
"Salam alaykum dear" she said her voice sounding excited than usual, she must definitely have a good gist.

"Walaykum salam mummy, this one you called me everything okay?" I teased.
"Everything is fine, shey I can't call my daughter again?" She teased back.
"You are free jawe, how's everything and I hope you are making sales?" I asked.
"Alhamdulillah oo, Rofiat nko?, it's been long I spoke to her" my mom replied.

"She's fine, she's not back from school yet, she would probably pray before coming back " I explained.
"That's nice, I hope you have prayed too?" She asked, mom never jokes with her daily prayer and she had instilled that into us.
"Yes ma, trust your girl nah, oya tell me the reason why you called oo" I teased knowing my mum had something to say.

She laughed softly " I don't have any gist oo, except for the fact that Aliyah thinks Abdul-Rahman and Faizah needs to visit a doctor, I had told her it's not too late, she should give them time, she started using Kareemah as an example, my son is the true son of his father , so I'm not surprised his wife is pregnant " My mom praised.
"Mummy Ibrahim!!!" I joked.

"Emi niyen oo, I will be having grand children soon" She replied.
"Tell ummu not to stress the couple oo, the problem may even be from brother Abdul -Rahman" I queried.
"Subhanallah Aishat !!, you and your mouth ehn!!, Better start asking God for forgiveness, you know that's not true" .
"How would I know, am I living with them, abeggi oo " I replied dragging the "O"

"Since you don't know ,then don't jump into conclusion, I'm even disturbing you , Go and read" she said.
"Thank God you know, Good night ,greet Areef for me,and tell Salma she should try replying her messages sometimes, so we know she's still alive"

My mom laughed loudly, my father mumbled something about her disturbing me , "she has exams ,I hope you know " he said as my mom laugh subsided.
"I will tell her and to think she's always with her phone, before your dad seize my phone let me hang up" my mom joked.
I laughed loudly, mumbling a Good night before the call went off.

Rofiat stood in the middle of the room looking at me as if I was going nuts.
"Salam alaykum oo, one day they will carry the whole house along with you, Mark my words she said.
"Rofiat abegg, I have heard enough laugh for tonight, don't add to it" I replied trying to avoid any conversations.

"I'm sha telling you, be careful , Cause I entered the house now and you didn't even notice "
"Yes ma'am" I replied laughing again.

Chapter 9

My coursemates walked out of the exam hall shouting and laughing,we just finished our last paper, I still don't want to believe this is it , unlike me who was finding it hard to believe,my coursemates were already changing into White shirts, this people don't know anything about chills at all.

"I stood aside, watching Bimpe signing on people's shirt, she was friendly with almost all our coursemate, something I couldn't achieved despite my four years in school, I love being alone, Bimpe was the only friend I had in my department, I only talk to a few other people because they are probably Muslims or Bimpe was friendly with them.

"Too big to sign out or what?", A voice said from behind.
Turning ,it turns out to be—Diekola, my department HOC.

I smiled staring at him," I was just about to go join the others "
"Well let me be the first to sign" he said.
I slowly removed my white shirt, I was dressed in a flared blue abaya,paired with a matching blue scarf, pulling a marker out of bag , I faced Diekola.
"Sorry, I need to sign for my mom and Dad first " I said

"No problem, let me help you with that" he replied holding the shirt as I scribbled dad and mom on it, on a second thought, I proceeded to write my brother's name, Salma and also Areef.
Diekola chuckled softly "I thought it was only Dad and mum.
"Still family right??" I replied ,putting on my shirt.

"Congratulations"Diekola said as he signed on my shirt .
"Thank you" I mumbled at the same time signing at the back of Diekola's own

"Congratulations to us" I added again smiling.
"Yeah,see you later Aishat, my people are waiting for me" he said running off.
I laughed watching him, Diekola is everywhere, he was popular among our lecturers and other faculties , some people love popularity.

Bringing my phone out of pocket, I took a selfie holding my marker in my second hand, adding the caption "Alhamdulillah, God did" I proceeded to send it to my status, my mom, dad and my siblings.
Salma was the first to reply, "Masha Allah, latest graduate"

"Thank you, this one you replied today" I texted back to her.

Staring back at my phone the message didn't tick twice, Salma!! I whispered shaking my head , That girl doesn't deserve a phone.
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It was past evening time, I just returned from the mosque where I met Rofiat and other sisters who congratulate me and even signed on my shirt I found Bimpe standing with two of my coursemates, probably their name were Diana and Rakeebah ,I was not sure.

"Aisha!!" Bimpe called walking towards me.
"Hey" the one who was probably Rokeebah said.
I smiled back muttering an "Hi"

"So we were having a sign out celebration tonight, our coursemate organised it and we were about to leave for the venue, but "Bimpe" here said we should "wait for you". The other girl explained laying more emphasis on some certain words.
Bimpe smiled "I said we should wait for you, you are coming right?"

"This party....., is it going to go on till next morning" I asked dragging the first word.
"I told you she's not going to attend, let's go jawe" the one bearing Rokeebah snapped.
"Exactly, let's go, we should be there by now" the other girl added.

"Are you sure you won't be coming Aisha?" Bimpe asked.
"Yeah, have fun ,Kamal promised to take me out " I said whispering the Kamal part.
"Oh!!, you should have informed me earlier, have fun too girlie " Bimpe said winking at me as they walk away.

My phone buzzed loudly as Kamal's name popped on the screen.
"Salam alaykum...

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Kamal and I left the restaurant hurriedly, when we noticed it’s about to rain,we had to rush to his place since it was closer, stepping out of the car, the rain fell on me, my silk material sticking to my skin.

"Let's go inside, you are wet" he said holding my hands as he opened the door.
I removed my phone texting Rofiat , she would be worried,since I told her I would be home before 9.

"Sha be careful, and make sure you come back once it stops raining, or else I will come to Kamal's place and kick him" she texted back. I laughed loudly staring back at the phone.
"What's that?" Kamal asked walking towards me.
"It's Rofiat my roommate " I replied.

"Oh"
Kamal said, she and Rofiat were not on good terms, and Rofiat use every opportunity to show Kamal she doesn't like him.
"I don't know Rofiat is capable of making jokes " he muttered as he turned to the direction of his room.

Kamal returned few minutes later, he had changed into a blue kaftan.
"Here, Aisha" he said , in his hands was a shirt and one of his trousers.
"Huh?" I asked.

"Change into this , your clothes are wet, let me dry them for you before you leave, you can't be walking around in wet clothes" he explained.
"Oh thank you" I replied collecting the clothes from him.
Kamal chuckled "so you don't even want to change into my clothes, do you detest me that much?"
"No, it's not like that, Where can I change "I mumbled trying to avoid any argument.

"My bedroom ,or you can change in the rest room " he replied, not waiting for my reply he turned towards the direction of his kitchen.
"You can lock the door, if you don't trust me" he added.

Sighing loudly I walked into his bedroom.
Kamal's bedroom exuded warmth and coziness,soft calming blue hues dominated the space, I knew Kamal had a thing for the colour, but seeing the way he has every item in it , I was marveled.
From the carpet to the walls they were all blue—his wooden bedframe was adorned with intricate carvings,the bed was in the center of the room covered with a double colored duvet.

I turned slowly sighting the floor-to-ceiling curtain, patterned with subtle Arabic calligraphy this separated his prayer room from the rest of the bedroom,laid on it's floor was a cream coloured rug, Kamal was good with setting up a house.

"Hearing sound of utensils from the kitchen, I remembered I was supposed to change, the sky rumbled loudly , as the rain continue to fall heavily, shivering slightly from being in wet clothes for too long, I removed my abaya and wore his cloth."

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I walked into the living room feeling weird in Kamal's clothes, he sat on one of the chairs facing the TV a mug cup in hand.
He raised his head from his phone looking at me, "I was about to come and knock , you were taking so long, and that's already getting cold" he said pointing to the mug on the centre table.
"Oh I'm sorry, I guess it's been long I entered your bedroom everything has changed" I replied.

"Oh, It was just a little touch up here and there, I didn't do it alone though " he explained.
"Okay,but it's nice " I said walking to sit beside him on the sofa.
Taking my mug, I sipped the tea slowly, taking time to savour the taste, it was one of the best tea I have ever tasted.

"Mmm"I mumbled acknowledging the taste.
"It's nice right?" He asked winking at me.
"No, it's not" I replied laughing loudly.
"You are joking " he said shaking his head, the sky rumbled again and this time around there was lightening, the rain continued to fall heavily.

As if sensing my thoughts Kamal voiced out "I don't think you can go back home tonight, it's 10 already and this rain doesn't look as if it would stop anytime soon"
"So I should sleep here?" I asked my face showing I don't want to.

"Sleep here not sleep with me, it's different" Kamal joked laughing loudly.
I looked back at him with a stern gaze , Kamal realising I didn't find it funny quickly apologised.
"I'm sorry, but you are safe, I'm not going to do anything since you don't want it."

"No it's fine,let me message Rofiat. I picked up my phone typing a few words I pressed the send button, I didn't wait for her reply, Rofiat would not like the idea of me sleeping at Kamal's place but I have no choice.

Putting my phone on DND , I dropped it back in my bag.

Chapter 10

"Go and sleep in my bedroom I will use the Couch" Kamal said,when he noticed I was already feeling sleepy.
"....and I would love to finish this movie it's interesting" I replied pointing at the TV.

"Yeah I know butterfly, but you had a long day,you can watch it later " he replied standing up.
Walking with sleepy eyes I entered Kamal's bedroom and made my self comfortable on his bed.

I didn't sleep for long, maybe it was because I was not in the comfort of my own room,I was thirsty and I proceeded to the living room to get water from the fridge.
"Kamal curled on the chair, shivering from cold, he didn't look comfortable and at the same time not covering himself.
"Kamal" I whispered tapping him.
He opened his eyes slowly looking at me "what's the problem Aisha?"

"You are not comfortable on the chair, I think you should use the bed, I will sleep here" I offered.

"No I'm fine, go back to sleep" he replied.
"You need the bed more than me" I said looking at him as he shivered again.
"I can't allow you to sleep on a chair, stay in the bedroom" he replied.
I looked back at him, If he continue sleeping on the chair he would probably fall sick tomorrow.
"We can both sleep on the bed" I said a voice in my heard warning me.

"What??" Kamal asked again looking surprised.
"Sleep on the bed , it's not like we would be doing other thing except from sleep" I replied chuckling at the end.
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Kamal and I lay wide awake , we didn't say anything to each other, I had suggested using a pillow to set boundary between both of us.
His shivering had stopped and he had covered himself with one part of the blanket, the other part covering me.

Out of the blue, I coughed loudly, Kamal turned immediately facing me.
"Are you okay, he asked touching my hand"
"Yeah , it's just cough" I replied, his hand was cold and it felt good on my skin, he didn't remove his hand after and we stayed there holding hands.

Aishat! , Kamal called , his gentle gaze locked on mine and I saw desire in his eyes.
"Yes " I replied, not sure of whatever I was feeling .

"Are you sure, Aisha?" Kamal whispered, his voice husky with emotion, his breath tickling my skin.

I nodded, my voice caught in my throat. Kamal's eyes never left mine as he leaned in, his lips brushing against my lips, sending shivers down my spine.
"You kissed him !!" A voice in my head echoed, I pushed it aside , returning the kiss.

The room around us melted away, Kamal raised his hand to unbutton my shirt , I didn't say anything I watched him eagerly.
With a gentle tug, Kamal pulled me closer, and I knew that our love was about to transcend words.

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I lay beside Kamal, his chest rising and falling with each steady breath. The warmth of his body still enveloped me, but my mind had already begun to drift away.
What had I just done?
Shame and guilt crept in, like unwelcome visitors. I thought I was stronger. But in that moment, I'd let my desires consume me.

Kamal's gentle fingers traced patterns on my skin, but I couldn't shake off the feeling of disappointment in myself. I'd promised myself I'd wait, that I'd prioritize my faith and values.
"Aisha?" Kamal whispered, noticing my distant gaze. "What's wrong?"

I forced a weak smile, not wanting to ruin the moment for him. "Nothing, I'm just...tired."
Kamal's eyes narrowed slightly, sensing the unease beneath my words. He pulled me closer, his lips brushing against my forehead.

"We'll figure this out together, okay?" he whispered.
But I knew I needed to figure myself out first.

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The call of Adhan from a nearby mosque woke me up, Kamal lay beside me shirtless, he was wearing only shorts, the shame of what we had done last night engulfed me.

"Aishat what have you done?" I muttered to myself ,a tear slipping from my eye.
A second glance at Kamal, I got down from the bed and proceeded to pack my stuffs, I can't face the reality of what I had done, the only thing I could do was run!!.

It was still dark outside, but I didn't care , I walked and walked my bag slumped on my shoulder ,a tear calculating each step I took, I was not even bold to return to my hostel, would Rofiat know what I had done when she sees me??.
I didn't know how many hours I trekked, but I found myself seated at a park where I didn't know even existed.
"The security had looked at me as if I was mad, when he saw me sitted in front of the park"
"Good morning sir" I had greeted the old man, using my handkerchief to clean my face.

"Good morning, did you sleep here?" He asked pointing towards the chair I sat on.
"No sir, I just reached here this morning, I needed a place to clear my head" I replied smiling to back it up.
"Okay, the park opens at 7, it's just 6:54, but I will let you in, Sha take it easy " he replied.

The man had allowed me in as he promised and I walked around the park for a while, I didn't shed a single tear but I was broken inside.
"I got tired after a while and had proceeded to sit under one of the trees in the park, The sun was beginning to show, the sky showing orange ahead."

Slipping my hand into my bag, I brought out my phone and switched it on , 20 missed call the notification popped on my screen, looking more bigger than normal, checking the caller it was Kamal, my sight became blurry,the tears settling in again.
"Okay be home early" Rofiat had replied since yesterday night.
"Congratulations darling, I was busy at work yesterday" My brother had sent.
"I will call you tomorrow, it's late already I know you would be asleep" my mom had texted.

I chuckled softly " yes!! I was asleep , not in my room, I had slept with a man"

"My phone rang loudly, Kamal's name popped on the screen, hissing with annoyance " I rejected the call and proceeded to block his number.
"This was all his fault, I should have left him in the living room to continue shivering."

My phone rang again, I hissed loudly looking at the least person I was expecting their call, - Abdul-Rahman Ahmad.
I didn't reject the call, I picked it up, preparing to vent all my anger on him.

"Salam alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh" he voiced out his tone showing admiration instead of mockery.
"Wa alaykum salam" I replied.
"Congratulations, I should have called yesterday, but I had a lot to do at work" he said.
"Okay , thank you, you don't have to call though,you can text me" I replied.
"Oh!, does my voice bother you that much, I thought we were good now" he said laughing softly.
Oh that laugh,I pictured how his dimple would be visible as he laughed.
"We are not good,we won't ever be good, have a nice day" I replied hanging up the call.

I picked up my bag, it's time to go home, Rofiat had another paper today,so she won't be around for a while.

Chapter 11

One month later...

After completing my project, I decided to stay back in Lagos, despite my parents' disapproval, especially my dad, who wanted me to join his company. Kamal and I had made amends three weeks ago, with the understanding that we would maintain distance until marriage. He was scheduled to meet my parents by the end of the month.

As I sat in Rofiat's room, my phone buzzed with a notification. I eagerly picked it up, hoping it was Kamal's response to my message from two days ago. Instead, it was an MTN alert. I hissed in annoyance.
Rofiat hadn't minded me staying with her, but I knew I needed to find a suitable house soon.

My phone rang loudly, breaking the silence. Farid's name flashed on the screen.
"Salam alaykum," he greeted, his voice accompanied by the sound of water in the background.
"Wa alaykum Salam, Farid," I replied.

"I just called to check if you're okay and to let you know I've arrived at my hostel," he said, his excitement palpable.
"Oh, Alhamdulillah! But you didn't tell me you'd arrive today," I accused.
"I didn't want to bother you, and Daddy's driver brought me," he explained.

"Umm, okay, that's good," I replied, distracted by an incoming message from Kamal.
Farid wrapped up our conversation. "We'll talk later, I have a lot to do."
After he hung up, I checked Kamal's message. He had only replied to my "how are you" from two days ago, with no explanation for the delay.
I dropped my phone, feeling frustrated. "Is God finally punishing me for my sins?" I wondered.

The following week, I immersed myself in volunteering for a charity organization. We visited orphanages, psychiatric hospitals, and schools. Though exhausting, it kept my mind occupied.
Kamal's silence was deafening. The only person who texted daily was Dad, sending Hadith and news that I rarely opened.
Bimpe and I caught up during the week; she had moved in with her boyfriend. I couldn't fathom living with someone before marriage.

On Sunday, nausea overwhelmed me. Rofiat's concern grew as I skipped meals.
"You have to eat," she urged, forcing me to drink pap in the evening.
On the third day, Rofiat insisted I visit the hospital. "AISHAT, please go to the clinic today, or I'll drag you."

Reluctantly, I agreed.
The hospital wasn't crowded. As I waited, my anxiety grew.
"Come in, Miss Aisha," the doctor called.

Inside his office, I explained my symptoms. He listened attentively, scribbling notes.

"When last did you see your period?" he asked, his eyes locked on mine.
"Huh? I think last month," I replied, my heart racing.
"Okay," he said, scribbling again.
"You might be pregnant."
The words echoed in my mind, leaving me stunned.

I stepped out of his office, vision blurry, tears streaming down my face as I clutched the paper for the lab request.

The devil was finally catching up with me...

Chapter 12.

I was asked to wait at the reception after my test, I stared back at the white ceiling in the hospital, hoping a revelation would be there.
How would I face my parents, what would I tell Ibrahim, will Salma still find me irritating, what of others,would they jeered at me and most of all will Allah ever forgive me for my sins?

These were the questions that filled my mind as I sat down waiting for the results, even if I'm not pregnant it won't change the fact that I have committed a sin.
My phone buzzed out loudly, Rofiat was the one calling she must have been worried.

"Salam alaykum, is there any problem?" She asked immediately I picked the call.
"Walaykum Salam, I did some test ,so they ask me to wait for the results" I replied.
"Oh okay, don't be late oo, I would prepare food down for you " Rofiat promised.

"Alright, I will come home as soon as I'm done" I replied.
The call went off , and I saw a nurse walking towards me.

"Good evening ma' am" she greeted.
I stood up immediately feeling nervous
"Good evening"
"The test results are ready , the doctor would like to see you" she said.
"Okay " I nodded following her closely , my palm covered with sweat.

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"Congratulations , you are four weeks pregnant"

The Doctor's voice echoed in my head, I had left the hospital trying to keep a straight face, but after walking for a few minutes I burst into tears not caring if anybody was looking at me.
My hand shaked , but I still held firmly to the paper bag they gave me at the hospital which contained my drugs.

"I wanted to call Kamal , to tell him the deed has been done, and it's time we face reality and know what to do next, but I couldn't. Was it out of fear , "No!", It was because I am still trying to digest that information, talkless of telling another person."

I took my phone to check the time, seeing it was almost 2 , I looked for a mosque nearby and prayed.

I left the mosque after praying and went home, I didn't want to keep Rofiat worried, stepping into the house she didn't bother to ask me anything she only looked at me and simply said
"You should call Kamal, He came by to check up on you I told him you've gone to hospital"
"He did??" I asked looking surprised, the last time I talked with him was a week ago.

"Yeah, I guess you didn't tell him you were sick, he was surprised when I told him you went to the hospital, he called you right??, you didn't pick"
"My phone was on mute" *I had muted it after I heard the news of my pregnancy*.
"I didn't know he called" I replied after checking my phone and truly Kamal's missed call was there.

"Now that you know, please call him I don't like seeing his face here " Rofiat said walking towards the kitchen.
"I would call Kamal, but maybe tomorrow, for now I am trying to sort out myself" I replied as she emerged from the kitchen with a plate of rice.

"Anyone, just call him that's my own , eat now and I don't want to hear I don't have appetite" Rofiat said placing the food on my bed and proceeding to sit on her own bed.

"Thank you" I replied, picking up the spoon from the plate.

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"Aishat!! " Kamal said from the other end.
"Salam alaykum" I replied my voice breaking at the end.
"Wa alaykum Salam Aisha , I came to your house yesterday to
talk to you, not knowing you were sick" he said.
"Yeah I am not sick " I replied.

"But Rofiat said you went to the hospital, I don't get you, she said you couldn't eat"
"Yeah I went to the hospital and discovered I was not sick" I said bursting into tears.
"Please what's the problem you are making me scared " Kamal replied his voice showing concern.

"I'm pregnant Kamal!! , I went to the hospital yesterday I'm pregnant I'm carrying a baby" I declared my voice shaking.
Kamal went silent, I continued to sob loudly.
"What have I done?" Kamal said eventually.
" Can I come over?" He added again.

"Yeah, we continued talking for a while until he later hanged up"

We didn't talk about the pregnancy I guessed he wants us to talk about it when he comes to see me.

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Kamal had arrived one hour after our call I had just finish praying when I heard a knock on the door
" salaam alaikum who is there?" I had asked
" wa alaykum Salam" a voice replied.

it's Kamal he added.
"Oh" I managed to say holding the door for him to enter.
Kamal stood there, holding a nylon in hand.
He stepped in slowly not bothering to hug me like he always did.

"I brought this, he said giving me the nylon.
"Thank you, I replied dropping it on the table"
"You should have called me , when it started, I meant the symptoms" he started after he settled on the bed and sat down beside me.

"I didn't know, I thought I only had malaria" I replied honestly , if someone told me I was pregnant I would have argued.
"It's fine we need to decide what to do with it before people start noticing" he replied , I stared back at him , he sounded as if he was not interested in the baby.

", I mean we should go to your parent's house next week and get married quickly" he added before I could utter anything.
"Okay, do you want anything to drink or eat" I asked.

"No! No!, you are pregnant with my baby I shouldn't stress you , let's drink the fruit juice I brought" he said smiling for the first time since he arrived.
I smiled back , standing up to go to the kitchen to get cups.

"Where are you going?" He asked looking at me.
"To get cups" , I replied.

" I will go get them" Kamal said walking to the kitchen.
I sat on the bed smiling, I think this can really work, I hope my parents won't delay my marriage.

"Here!" Kamal walked back in , with two cups filled with juice lying on the tray he was holding, he handed one to me and took one himself, he returned back to his place beside me.

"I'm sorry we had to do it before marrying and you ended up getting pregnant, it's all my fault" he started his tone filled with regrets.
I touched his shoulder, it's fine ,we would sort it out, I'm happy knowing you are ready to take responsibility.
"Thank you butterfly, you are really a sweet soul" he said pulling me into an hug.

Kamal and I talked for what seemed like an hour , I was happy he took the news better than I did, he assured me we would visit my parents next week,the fruit juice he brought had made the conversation more better, we finished the whole bottle.

Standing up to leave he touched my cheeks again " Aisha I'm sorry and I hope you would forgive me for everything I have done and the ones I would do"

"Kamal don't worry, like I said earlier, we would sort it out , I don't want you to think it's all your fault" I had replied.

He eventually left his eyes looking red " was Kamal that sorry?"

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"Aishat ,what's wrong again" Rofiat asked when she walked in and I laid on the bed clutching my stomach.
"I don't know, I just started feeling pains on my lower abdomen" I replied.
"Subhanallah!!, You were fine this morning before I left, what did you eat? Rofiat said her face looking very worried.

"I didn't eat anything" I replied a tear dropping from my eye, the pain was becoming unbearable.
"Let's go to the hospital, this is serious, I will call your parents when we get there"

"I don't think it's necessary to go, I will be fine" I replied if Rofiat followed me to the hospital it will reveal my pregnancy.
"You can't stay like this, are you sure you didn't eat anything " she asked again.

" I drank only fruit juice" I replied.
"Fruit juice should not be causing stomach pain nah, let's go she said trying to pull me up as I stood gently my vision becoming blurry.

"Aishat!!, Subhanallah, Blood" Rofiat exclaimed holding my hand and pointing at my bed, on the bedsheets were blood.
"Blood??, I'm not supposed to see my period" I muttered looking back at the bed which was now looking more redder.

"The baby" I muttered.
"Which baby ?" Rofiat replied still holding me .
The blood on the sheets, I replied weakly, my eyes closing slowly, I forced myself to keep it open.

The last sound I heard was Rofiat shouting my name.

Chapter 13

My body felt heavy, everywhere was dark, I forced myself to open my eyes , but it didn't , it felt as if something was blocking my vision.

"*Have I gone blind*" I asked my self.

"Something didn't feel right, I was supposed to be in my room, I remembered sleeping on the bed after Kamal left , how did I end up in this dark place."
I tried to move, my body felt bonded, I couldn't even lift my hand , I gave up afterwards, my mind drifting to the last thing I could remember.

"Blood!, Baby!" I muttered tears streaming from my eyes.
My vision was becoming more clearer and I can vividly see a white screen.
"Ahhh, Aishat!" Can you hear me? I heard a voice that sounds like my mom's.
"Kamal, he did this?" I replied ignoring her questions more tears streaming from my face.

"Salma , please call the doctor" my mom urged and I heard footsteps a few minutes later.
"I felt someone touching my hand the voice said to my mother , "she's regaining consciousness, you better thank God, it would have been another story if her friend didn't brought her in early".

"Alhamdulillah, thank you Doctor" my mom shouted, my vision better, I could clearly see I was in an hospital , but I just couldn't seem to open my mouth to talk.
"Hello oko mhi, yes she's awake , be coming..." My mom said over to someone on the phone.

"Where's your dad?" She asked again turning to Salma.
"They went to pray, you better calm down , it's good she's awake " Salma replied.

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I didn't know how I slept off again but when I woke up I found my mom seated on a plastic chair, staring back at me.
"Mum" I muttered my eyes getting wet.

"Aisha!!! ahhh ,you recognized me, thank God"
Before I could reply , she stood up and rushed out again.
The door opened few minutes later, mum walked in followed by my dad , I stared at them praying for the ground to swallow me."

"Nana! " My dad called sitting on the chair my mom once occupied.
"Sir" I replied.

"I don't know how you got pregnant, and I understand the world is becoming worse, but we are still your parents, you should have told us instead of trying to kill yourself" .
"Dad!" I called again this time sobbing loudly.
"I swear by Allah's name that I raised you rightly, I make sure you guys don't lack anything, and I'm very sure your mom must have warned you to stay away from men." My dad continued...

"I didn't raise you to become like this , I guess I didn't do a better job as a parent, maybe there was something missing, is it because I was not too strict?"
"I'm ashamed of myself and you right now, thinking about the dirty things you must have done with a man to get pregnant".

I sobbed loudly not daring to look at my dad.
"Abdul Malik please.." my mom said interrupting my dad.
"Don't even start, she has done something wrong, and she needs to know" my Dad voiced back.
"Please.., she just woke up" my Mom said putting her hand on Dad's chest.
"What if she just did " my Dad snapped jolting mom's hand away from his chest.
"Deal with it, I don't even want to stay in the same with her" he added storming out of the room angrily.

My mom called his name , running after him, the room went silent again and only my sobs could be heard.
It felt like hours , but the door to the hospital room creaked silently, I straightened up immediately, Ibrahim entered slowly staring at me with an expression I couldn't explain.
"Salam alaykum Aishat" he greeted taking his seat.

"Wa alaykum Salam" I replied.

"How are you?" He asked.
"I'm fine , Alhamdulillah"
"Humm!!, Aishat!!" My brother muttered staring at me.
"How did you allow this to happen, and why didn't you tell me?" He added.
I looked at my fingers, not saying anything, the room looked more whiter.
"I think you need to start talking, Dad is not even interested in having a conversation with you, so you are stuck with me" Ibrahim said , he sounds very angry.

"I was going to tell you people, he promised we would come to visit mom and Dad next week , I ..." I paused trying to stop the tears from falling.
" You were going to tell us, why are you lying Aishat, when did you become a liar" my brother accused his face void of any sympathy.

"Ya akhi.. I called staring back at him my face now covered with tears.

"I don't think you deserve to call me that , my own sister would never get pregnant and get rid of it , I thought we were close even if you had gotten pregnant by mistake you should have told me " Ibrahim said standing up.

"I didn't want to get rid of the baby, I didn't even think of aborting it, he promised we would come to visit next week" I replied.
"Stop talking about him, he doesn't care, we have been calling him since you passed out yesterday, He didn't pick his call, later his number was saying switch off, what kind of man did you fall in love with"
He must be busy, Kamal would never try to kill his baby, he was happy about it yesterday, he even apologized for the things he had done "He might be busy" I replied.

"Busy right?, I will give you the benefit of doubt ,I and Rofiat would go to his house today after Maghrib, I hope your Kamal is as pure as you think" Ibrahim said.
"Alright, thank you"

"Don't thank me yet , Nana!!!!
and the fruit juice you dranked last " he said looking at me.
"The cup you used was tested, one of it had abortion pills in them."
"Abortion pills?" I asked my head banging.
"Yes and if you insist you didn't abort the baby , then it must be the person you shared the fruit juice with"

Kamal didn't kill the baby, he couldn't have done it, I shaked my head looking back at my brother.
"Ma Salam Aisha" he said closing the door behind him.
I gripped the blanket trying to stop myself from crying. *Aishat!! , you are doomed.*

Chapter 14

"Go in , she's awake " I heard Salma said as the door opened slowly, Bimpe stepped in looking more broken than I.
"Aisha!" She called walking towards me.
Bimpe I called back standing up to sit straight, the Nurses had removed the remaining tube binding me to the bed this morning, and I can now walk round the room freely, though I can still feel some kind of pain in my lower abdomen.

"I don't even know what to say" she started still standing far from me.
"I know, it's funny I would be so foolish to get pregnant, despite being the one that preaches against sex before marriage" I said.
"Yeah , but I don't blame you, I understand" she replied softly.

"I guess it's over , I still want to believe Kamal is not responsible for this " I said looking at Bimpe, I hadn't noticed earlier but there were dark circles under her eyes, was she okayy??
"Hmm yeah" Bimpe replied sounding unbothered.

"You are lucky though you still have Fred"
"Please Aisha!!, I'm sick and tired of all of this" Bimpe said her voice becoming unnecessarily loud.
"What did I do, I only said you have Fred and I had nobody"I repeated again.

"This is the thing about you, you are always casting a shadow over me, I'm not going to allow that happen anymore" Bimpe replied .
I looked at her checking if she was okay "I don't understand , how am I casting a shadow over you"
"Please don't act innocent" she snapped.
"I only came to check up on you because of the friendship we once shared, it won't be bad if I say you deserve this, at least it helps me believe you are not perfect like everybody thinks" Bimpe added.

"Bimpe" I called my voice sounding shaky.
"Aisha, you are a very good person I can't deny that fact, but at the same time you are responsible for my miserable life, Fred only became mine because I know you won't want to date someone like him, Fred had a crush on you" she said crying softly this time around.
"Fred did what?, but he has been disturbing you since 100 level, I remembered how he always bring gifts for you, it was obvious he loved you" I replied weakly.

"That's what you know but there's more" Bimpe shakes her head laughing like a mad person, that didn't stop the tears dropping from her eyes.
"All the gift were yours, he didn't know how to confess his feelings for you, that's why he sent me to you, I didn't tell you anything then, I like Fred, I had a crush on him and I knew you wouldn't

want to date him since he's a Christian, I always tell him you don't like him even though I hadn't said anything about him to you " Bimpe paused this time around she pulled out an handkerchief to wipe her tears.

"One thing led to the other and he asked me to be his girlfriend, because you didn't give him a chance to, I was a second option, I knew about this , but I was too foolish and started dating Fred"
"Everyday Fred reminds me of how I'm inferior to you, ... Aishat will look good in this, Aisha would have said another thing, Aishat looks calmer than you, Aisha this Aisha that, at some point it was becoming annoying. If he texts me "how is Aishat?" , "Is she with you", this wasn't getting funny anymore , and now he broke up with me after I told him you have someone you are dating"
"I don't know how this is any of my fault, I didn't even do anything" I voiced out after listening to the stupid narration she did.

"It's your fault, I have to suffer everytime because of you, I have been behind you all the time, all the friends I have in school are people that wanted something from you and didn't know how to ask you, even though you don't even make an effort to talk to them, they still want to talk to you"
"Bimpe please, I'm sorry Fred broke up with you, but please I'm not in a good state for this conversation , can you stop being heartless and selfish, I just lost a baby" I said in a sharp voice.

"I don't care" Bimpe replied, my head banged loudly as her reply replayed in my head.
"This is the last time I'm coming here , I don't want to have anything to do with you again, I'm done allowing you to over shadow me, I wish you the best in life, you are beautiful you will still find another guy, but look at me..., I have a long way to go" Bimpe added again , she turned slowly walking back towards the door.

"Wait , we can talk about this, I understand you are fustrated because, Fred broke up with you, but please we shouldn't fight over it" I said hoping for her to calm down.
"No!, I'm not going to discuss anything with you.
To you- Fred is not worth fighting for , but to me it's different, I will urge you to stay away from me , I wish you the best in life, stay away from men like Kamal, I hate to admit it, Rofiat was right. She replied. The door closing behind her before I could say anything I stared back at the closed door sobbing softly.

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I had cried myself to sleep, my eyes opened slowly to see Ibrahim looking at me.
"Ya akhi" I mumbled standing up to sit.
"Easy Aishat , don't wound yourself" he said.
"I'm fine, for how long did I sleep?" I replied rubbing my eyes.

"You only slept for an hour, after your friend left"
"Hmm, okay , so what about your visit to Kamal?" I asked, hoping it would be something good.
"Kamal , was that his name ? " My brother replied evading my question.

"Yes , that's his name, did you see him yesterday?" I asked again.
"We did, he wasn't happy to see us , if not because I was there ,Rofiat was ready to tore him apart."
"Ya akhi!!, what did he say" I said calmly ignoring his reply.
"Well, you are not a baby anymore it's better to come clean with you on this situation, to cut everything short, Kamal doesn't want to have anything to do with you " my brother said bluntly, for the first time in my life I hated my brother's blunt attitude.

I didn't wait to hear the rest of whatever he had to say , I turned slowly walking to the window sill, my eyes blurry with tears.
"I'm sorry Aisha, but the guy doesn't deserve you, even as a man I would never ever do that to a lady , he's an animal, forget the fact that he's religious and all ,but at the end of the day some people are still humans." I heard my brother say, if he was trying to console me then he was definitely doing a bad job.

I continued sobbing , I heard footsteps behind me knowing it was my brother I didn't bother to turn.
"Aisha!, I know this is sad , but it's for the best, now you know the kind of man you were intending to marry , he even went far to killing an innocent baby, that fool"

Did he ... give any reason for it? I asked hoping to get a valid reason that would justify why Kamal had to behave like this, it was a foolish thought but still I was trying not to believe that Kamal would kill my baby.
"The lady I saw with him at the restaurant that day" a voice replied suddenly, replaying it in my head it sounds more like Rofiat's voice.

"Rofiat??" I said turning slowly, she stood in front of me dressed in a blue Abaya, her face looking angry.
"Yeah, Salam alaykum, brother Ibrahim texted me, I guess he didn't know how to explain things to you slowly" Rofiat replied.

"I'm sorry Diamond!, it would be better if this is a girl's conversation, you can call me when you guys are done" he replied walking away.
"Safeeerah!!" I exclaimed again after my brother left.

"Yeah Safeeerah , I think that's her name, they are getting married in the next two months, it turns out that Kamal is working in her mom's company" Rofiat explained.
"Wait I don't understand, Kamal said it himself, I paused more tears streaming down my face.

"Oh my God, Aisha, this guy is not worth crying over , wallahi if brother Ibrahim had allow me I'd spit t on his face, he disgusts me"
"I don't believe this..., He said there was nothing between him and Safeeerah , he assured me, l need to ask Kamal myself" I replied suddenly having a splitting headache.

"Their engagement pictures is all over the internet, her father is an important figure, there's nothing we can do I can only say Kamal was greedy for wealth , if he was planning on marrying Safeeerah he should have come clean with you ."

"Can I see the pictures" I said after going silent for a while.
"I'm sorry I can't show you, we are not supposed to tell you this yet , but brother Ibrahim said it's safer you know now than later."
"I was so stupid, I should have listened to you , I ... should have left Kamal earlier, I can't believe I allowed him to ... I paused slowly sniffing and sobbing again.

"It's okay Aisha, it's not your fault, Kamal is the stupid one here" Rofiat replied pulling me closer and patting my back, I didn't say anything I continued to sob loudly not bothering if I was ruining her favourite Abaya with my tears.

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Nana! ,Oh my God" Mrs Ahmad said walking towards me her face filled with pity.

I don't want to be pitied

"Salam alaykum ummi" I greeted hugging her back, she held me for a long time not bothering to leave me alone.

"Aisha , Salam alaykum" Abdul- Rahman said walking in, beside him was my brother , who was dressed in a blue shirt and black trousers, I looked away from him , the colour reminding me of someone I was trying to forget.

"I'm sorry, I wanted to follow Maryam the day, she called crying that you fainted in your bedroom and you have been rushed to the hospital, but it came up out of the blue and I had to call Abdul-Rahman , he was busy with work , he drove from oshogbo to Lagos yesterday, I'm sorry I wasn't here to console you" Mrs Ahmad explained.
"It's fine, I was the one that should apologize for disturbing everybody" I looked up smiling at my brother, I was grateful ,he had left his wife, child and even his work to stay here with me, Salma didn't go to school either, she was either sitting in front of my ward or checking up on me in the room from time to time, Dad had returned back to Lagos yesterday, he was still angry but

at least he had touched my hand yesterday "Nana ,I will be back, but when I do, I want to see the smiling daughter I always knew"

That only had brought out tears from my eyes , but I was hoping for the best, I had laughed a lot this morning with Rofiat, when she was busy showing me some videos on her phone, she was here too, and only leaves whenever she had classes, I was grateful to everyone, they had showered with love even at my lowest and I would never forget it.

"Don't say that!, you are not stressing us ,we should stand by you at this point, you need your family more" Mrs Ahmad pointed out bringing me back from my thoughts.
"Thank you ma" I said softly.

"Don't thank me jawe, have you eaten and where's Maryam self, did she follow her husband back to Lagos nhi?" Mrs Ahmad asked in a Nigerian English intonation.
"She went out with Salma to get fruits , the doctor said Aisha needed it" my brother replied.

"Fruits??, She should have told me now, I would have brought it from Lagos, is that not so Abdul Rahman??" Mrs Ahmad said turning towards her son .
"Yes , mom" he replied , I looked back at him , he was dressed in a Gold t-shirt, with a pair of black trousers just like my brother.

"Aisha how are you feeling?" he added again after replying to his mom.
"I'm fine , Alhamdulillah" I said smiling to maybe prove it.
"We should leave you both to talk, I and Abdul Rahman would step out for a while" My brother said suddenly.

"Okay Go!, I need to talk with Aishat " Mrs Ahmad replied waving her hand.

“See you later Nana” Abdul Rahman said walking to the door, my brother turned to smile at me , I give him an assuring smile too, if everybody was trying to adjust with the situation I should to.

The door closed behind them "Nana " Mrs Ahmad called touching my hand.

" I don't want you to allow this to ruin you completely, see it as a phase that has passed, I won't blame you,men can be cunning, and you see that boy he's the one at fault.... my poor baby he must have manipulated you telling you sweet words ... If I should get my hands on him he's....

Chapter 15

I was happy when the doctor told me I was going to be discharged the next day.

"Miss Aisha, it seems you are recovering much faster than we imagine, you will be discharged tomorrow, but please make sure you use your medications, it's all thanks to God and that your friend brought you in early or else it would be a different story" the doctor had explained this morning.

I was happy, leaving the hospital would make me feel better, it reminds me of how I lost my baby foolishly, I don't want to think about Kamal at all, my parents are making arrangements for me to move back to Oyo, I'm going to miss LAGOS, and mostly ROFIAT, she was the only genuine one apart from my family , we had bonded a lot in the past few days and not for once did Rofiat judged me for being pregnant.

The door to the hospital opened slowly, I didn't bother to check who walked in, I knew it was Salma who had excused herself earlier to discuss a maths equation that they solved in class, since she has been skipping school.

"Salam alaykum" A man's voice greeted me , when did Salma voice become so deep.
"I turned, eager to know who had the voice

Farid stared back at me, dressed in a black T-shirt and black trousers , his hands was kept in his pocket and he raised his eye, looking disappointed
"Farid, I ... ... when " I stammered.

"Why did you have to hide it from me?" Farid asked ignoring my stammering.
"I thought we were close, I trusted you and I thought you did to" he added in a calm voice.

I stared back at him silently, Farid and I had been close after we met on the beach months back, but telling him I was pregnant would be really difficult.
"I trust you too, but Farid , you should understand..." I replied after a while.

"I don't know, but sincerely I'm not happy you hid it from me, from us, I didn't know you were in the hospital not until yesterday night, I feel like a bad person" Farid said taking his seat on the chair placed beside my bed.

"I'm sorry, everything happened so suddenly my parents were worried about me, no one could have remembered to call you, and you are not a bad person, the Farid I know will always be good." I replied.

"I understand, how are you feeling now?" He asked
Better, I replied.

"Alhamdulillah" he replied dipping his hands in his pocket again, I have noticed he actually does that whenever he's nervous.

"What if your trousers, doesn't come with pockets?" I asked suddenly trying to lighten up the mood.

"Huh" he asked feeling lost , realising what I meant he laughed loudly, his dimple becoming visible.

I smiled back , he should probably start laughing more, his face when he laughs looks beautiful, I looked at him again, his face giving familiarity, was it nostalgia ,but I bet I have seen that face before.

"All my trousers come with pockets" he replied.

I pushed my weird thought aside nodding to his reply.

We sat in silence, each one of us looking at nothing in particular.

"Was he worth it" Farid asked suddenly.

"Huh?" I asked looking clueless.

"Kamal, was he worth it" he repeated again staring into my eyes.

"I don't know, he was just giving all the green flags and I fell for it" I replied truthfully.

"Oh okay" he nodded his head, Farid was like my elder brother they don't give too much information than necessary, and won't ask for much either.

"He's a fool, he doesn't deserve you, I want you to know that." He added again.

My phone beeped loudly, my brother had handed back my phone to me yesterday,but I haven't gathered the courage to call anyone , talkless of going online I only watched some K drama on it, and listened to Nasheed.

"Who's that?" Farid asked when I picked up the phone.

"I don't know, I replied , an SMS message was sent to me and the number was looking familiar"

"Check" Farid replied casually.

I nodded, I read few lines from the message and immediately tears gathered in my eyes, my hands shaked ,as the phone dropped back on the bed.

" Sis Aishat what's wrong?" Farid asked looking worried.

I couldn't reply, my throat felt dry, I found it very hard to speak , Kamal picked up his phone as he called someone, I stared back at him my vision blurry with tears , Sister Aisha please calm down , he begged as he took my phone from the bed.

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The programme had ended a while ago, it was an event organized by the MSSN , I would have left when Rofiat did, but I was waiting for Bimpe, we had classes in the evening,so I decided to wait back at the venue since it was closer to where our lecture would take place.

The weather was dark outside ,it felt as if it was going to rain anytime soon, I ignored it deeply engrossed in an horror Novel Bimpe recommended to me.

"Subhanallah" I had shouted unknowingly when I read a shocking scene from the Novel.

"Salam alaykum, is everything okay" I heard a voice from behind me.

Putting my hands on my mouth, I turned slowly , a guy stood behind me, I recognized him to be one of the executives of MSSN, I was not a regular member like Rofiat so I hardly know them, but it was hard to not notice this particular guy, I remembered how he moved from one place to another during the event, a smile plastered on his face, he was dressed in a royal blue native which complimented his looks.

"Wa alaykum Salam, everything is okay, was it that loud?" I replied giving him one of my best smile.

"Yes ma!, even the people outside the hall could hear it " he said laughing softly.

I stared back at him trying hard not to laugh "that's a very big lie, maybe you just have long ears"

"Did you just indirectly refered to me as a Rabbit?" He asked ,the smile still on his face.

"Well, anything you call yourself" I laughed softly enjoying his sense of humor.

"Anyways, I'm Kamal, what's your name beauty?, I have never seen this face before?" He asked his face holding some kind of amusement.

"Nice to meet you Kamal, but I don't give my names to strangers" I replied turning my head back to my iPad.

I thought he was going to leave, but he walked to my front , I peeped a little from my phone,as his body perfume engulfed the atmosphere.

"I don't think I'm a stranger to you, you just called me Kamal, and we had a good laugh earlier, doesn't that make us friends?" He asked.

I looked up at him shaking my head "No, that doesn't make us friends, I only knew your name because you told me"

"True, but it won't be bad if....." The cloud rumbled loudly swallowing the rest of his word.

As if on clue Bimpe's message popped in "I think you should start going home,the class has been cancelled due to the change in weather."

"Okay, thank you" I sent back to her.

"Why are you frowning?" The Kamal guy asked again.

"My class has been cancelled, to think I waited here for nothing" I replied hissing with annoyance.

"You waited here for nothing??, Am I not something to you, meeting me while waiting here is a big blessing" he said , this guy must be so proud of himself.

"Pride is that you?" I joked picking up my bag from the chair.

He laughed loudly , I didn't know if I was that funny or he was just exaggerating it "I'm not proud" he declared afterwards.

"Whatever, I'm leaving" I said.

"Let me walk you to the gate?" He offered.

I didn't know why I agreed but,the so called Kamal guy had walked me to the gate, after waving down a keke , I turned slowly back to him "my name is Aishat" I said.

"Nice name, ma Salam!, see you again Aisha" he had replied waving back at me, his wide smile sticking to my brain.

Chapter 16

I curled myself on the hospital bed looking at Abdul-Rahman and my brother, who looked as if they were going to kill someone in the next two minutes.
"Please we need to calm down, you can see your sister is still shaking from the shock" my mom pointed out putting an hand on my shoulder.

"I now agree we have humans and animal, this boy is clearly a goat, he's the most foolish animal I have ever came across" Mrs Ahmad replied referring to Kamal.
Farid had reached out to my brother after I received the message Kamal sent, he was really worried that he had to pull the duvet to cover me when I started shaking, he stood at a corner of the ward looking at everybody.

"Ibrahim we should clearly report this boy to the police, drugging someone without their content and threatening them, No this is too much" Abdul Rahman said his voice depicting anger.

"Yeah you are right, I don't think he has any remorse for what he did" my brother replied if someone was good with hiding emotions it was clearly him.
"I think we should ask Aisha what she wants first?" Farid said, his voice more calmer than my brother's, they both had almost the same character.

"I think Bro Farid is right, even if the message was to threaten her, the guy is still telling the truth my sister's reputation is at stake if we inform the police" Salma added.
Ibrahim looked at both Farid and Salma shaking his head, he turned towards me, "Aishat what do you want, should we sue him"

I stared at my brother, "No" I replied the content of the message replaying in my head.

Hey butterfly, sorry to disturb I know you are yet to recover from what happened to you, but this is urgent, I will implore

you to warn your brothers to stop disturbing me, I know I didn't do well by aborting your pregnancy but it's for the best, I was going to marry Safeeerah , and impregnating someone won't look good for our wedding, deep down you know I helped you, If things get out that you got pregnant for me before marriage, people will mock you,they would call you names, it's few days to my marriage,tell your brothers not report me to any authorities , and then everybody can move on with their life, or would you be happy if it goes out that you were clearly having sex with an engaged man...

"No, we should leave him to God" I replied again, my eyes becoming wet.
My brother nodded in understanding, Abdul-Rahman heaved a sigh...

"Come here Aisha" Mrs Ahmad said.
" I didn't think about it twice I wrapped my arms around her, crying loudly,she didn't care if I was staining her expensive Abaya with tears"
My mom patted my back, "it's okay Aishat, stop crying please." I didn't stop... I continued crying loudly.

"Everything would be okay diamond" my brother said quietly.
"I hope so" a voice in my head replied.

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“Salam alaykum, there you are" Kamal said as I walked out of the lecture room with Bimpe.

"Wa alaykum Salam" , lifting an eye in confusion, I wasn't expecting the guy I met few weeks ago, to be standing in front of me.

"I'm not stalking you, wallohi, I came here with my friend" he said pointing to a black tall guy,who was busy conversing with a guy in my faculty.

"Are you sure?" I asked noticing Bimpe already left my side, *that sly*.
"I'm sure, maybe God wants us to meet again" he replied smiling.
"Okay now that we have seen each other, Bye!" I said trying to walk away.

"Wait Aishat, I should collect your number, who knows I may likely not run into you like this again," he replied bringing out his phone from his pocket

"Aishat let's go" my mom urged as I stood in front of the hospital taking a look at the building where I had spent a whole two weeks.

"I'm coming" I said turning back to look at her, Abdul Rahman and Mrs Ahmad had left yesterday, my brother was the one taking I , Salma, and Areef back to Oyo.

"Aisha let's go, we still need to go to your hostel to pack your luggages" my brother called again.

I nodded and entered the car, the journey to my hostel was silent, no one bothered to talk, the only sound in the car was coming from the game Areef was busy playing on the phone, as we turned to the street leading to my hostel, my brother gave him a side eye, the sound was becoming more loud and annoying.

"Areef dear, reduce the volume of that game"My mom said noticing the silent stares my brother was giving him.

"Okay ma" he said the noise reducing immediately.
"Areef dear" Salma teased.
I chuckled softly.

"It's not funny" Areef snapped, turning his head, he was sitting in front with my brother.
"It's actually funny" she snapped back, by this time we already reached my hostel.
"The two of you should grow up and stop behaving like kids" my brother scolded as he stopped the car.

Salma grumbled...Areef laughed loudly.

"Are you okay?" Rofiat asked for the third time today, I was busy packing all the stuffs on my reading table.
"I'm fine" I said nodding my head, even though I was crying inside.

"I heard everything about what Kamal sent" she said putting her hands on my shoulder, my brother and the rest were outside,they were arranging my packed luggages into the car."
"Yeah, he was right though" I replied a knot tying in my stomach.

"There's nothing right about what that fool said, I should have sent him away from you a long time, I understand the reason why you don't want to take this matter to court, but please I need you to heal from this quickly, he's not worth it" Rofiat explained.

"I will, I promise" I said nodding my head.

Lifting my last luggage from the floor I walked to the door ,Rofiat following me closely behind.
Areef collected the luggage, as I stepped outside a cool breeze blowing my Abaya.
"So this is it?" Rofiat said sounding nervous.

"Yeah" I replied, thank you for everything Rofiat,you are a good friend" I added.
"Don't thank me , if I was the one you would have done the same" she replied smiling.

"Rofiat!!, Ahh, thank you for everything" My mom said pulling her in for a hug.

"It's nothing ma, please take care of Aishat, I will visit you soon" she replied.

"Okay dear"
My brother closed the bonnet of the car, "Thank you Rofiat,for everything you did for my sis"

Rofiat smiled "it's nothing Brother Ahmad, Aisha is also like family"
"Okay we would take our leave now, it's getting late"
Rofiat nodded turning to look back at me "I'm going to miss you" , she said softly.
"Same here" I replied.

"Call me with your new number" Rofiat said, her eyes looking wet.
I nodded looking back at her.

"Good bye Rofiat"

Good bye Aishat .....

Chapter 17.

The first week after I had returned to Oyo, I had occupied myself with watching movies, playing video games with Areef, and listening to Salma ideas for a new story, my Dad advised it was better if I started working, his reason was that it would keep me engaged.

he understood the fact that I didn't want to work in his company, so I was to resume in one his friend's company next week.

I walked into the living room a plate of plantain in hand, Salma just returned from school, and she proceeded to the kitchen to fry plantain. - "I'm hungry" she had simply stated when I found her in the kitchen frying plantain with her school uniform, she doesn't like eating that much, but when Salma is hungry she eats more than her normal portion.

My phone buzzed loudly, I frowned looking at it to discover it was an unknown number, my brother had collected my old SIMS from me, and I had gotten another I only have a few contacts saved on my phone and most of them family, except Rofiat and one of my secondary school mate I saw last week, who had made it her job to keep posting memes on her WhatsApp status.

I picked up waiting for the caller to speak "Salam alaykum" A male voice greeted, it sounded familiar.
"Wa alaykum Salam" I replied,eager to know who it was.

"It's Abdul-Rahman, Ibrahim gave me your new number and I said I should call" he said.
"Oh okay, thank you" I replied awkwardly.

"Alright,take care,this is my number save it" he replied hanging up immediately.
I hissed loudly at least he should have waited for me to reply before he hung up.

"Is that Brother Abdul Rahman?" Salma asked walking into the kitchen.
"It's him" I replied, dropping my phone back to the couch.
"Hmm, May Allah help him oo" Salma replied taking a seat beside me.
"Amin, but did something happen?" I asked.

"Mewa lo n sele, Faizah isn't pregnant yet,and Mrs Ahmad has been on his neck" Salma explained.
"I don't blame the poor lady oo, how do you want her to get pregnant, with that man she's married to, that annoying guy" I replied.
Salma burst out laughing "what's with you and Brother Abdul Rahman?"
"Don't even ask, you know" I replied smiling back.
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Kamal called on the night I gave him my number

I just finished praying Maghrib when my phone ranged, checking the caller I noticed it was an unknown number

Picking up the call a voice greeted

Salam alaykum Aishat

Wa alaykum Salam, I replied curious to know who was calling

It's Kamal, he had replied, but I pretended not to know who was calling

Kamal??, I repeated

Yeah, the one from the MSSN programme,that met you in your Faculty today*he replied.

I wanted to laugh but I didn't, instead I replied

Oh it's you, this is your number right,I will save it

Okay,he replied

So you have lot of people that collected your number today huh?, He teased

Well, it's not everyday a Kamal calls me, after they stalked you to your Faculty, I teased back.

“Stalk you, I'm not that desperate, Aishat!" He replied my name rolling off his tongue as a deep breathe followed

You know when you collect a lady's number,you wait till the third day before you call them??

“Really??, Sorry we didn't learn that in school, anyways are you free tomorrow?”,He asked

I didn't reply immediately, I know what it meant, he probably wanted to take me out

Aisha! I asked a question, he called again, his voice suddenly becoming cool to my ears

“I know , I'm free tomorrow”, I replied, ignoring the voice in my head

Okay, cool, there's a new restaurant in town,we should go there,I heard their food is good...

...

"Aishat!" Lydia called tapping my table.
I raised my head slowly, I must have slept off during work hours, I rubbed my head, which was looking as if I'm going to develop an headache soon."

"Lydia, what is it?" I asked slowly looking at my colleague,I had resumed work on Monday and truly it helped get my mind off a lot of things"
"It's lunch time, I have eaten already,I bought lunch for you." Lydia said handing a white nylon to me, inside was a takeaway.

"Thank you,but you shouldn't have gone through that stress...
"Please, eat,did I tell you I had to break a leg before I got that" Lydia replied cutting me off.

I laughed loudly, shaking my head I proceeded to open the cover,the smell of Dodo engulfed the air, clouding my thoughts.
"Like what you see?, better hire me to be your boyfriend" Lydia joked winking at me.

"Eww, don't ever wink at me again, better face your front, no be only hire" I joked back.

Lydia laughed loudly staring back at her phone "chai , look at this cute couples, some people are just too lucky" she stated.

"Let me see, everybody is getting married these days" I replied.
Lydia turned the screen of her phone towards me, A lady stared back at me smiling as if she just won a lottery, she was dressed in a big flowy gown, and wrapped around her head was an Hijab.

"she's beautiful" I said admiring the pearls that arranged themselves at the sleeve of her gown.
"She is now,you don't know Safeeerah, you this girl ehn?" Lydia said tapping her phone again.

Safeeerah!!, It can't be the one I know I pushed the thought away staring at Lydia's phone.
"See the cute couples"

I stared hard at the phone ,a familiar face stared back at me I *told you already butterfly, she's just a sister to me....*

I was supposed to look away but I didn't, the pain I thought I had locked somewhere came rushing back, my throat felt dry all of a sudden.

"Aishat is everything okay?" Lydia asked.

Yes ,I wanted to say, but my mouth tasted like salt and the food I ate, returned back to my mouth, rushing out of the office I ran to the restroom and locked the door immediately.

WhatsApp Channel

Chapter 18.

Please, this is nobody's fault how could the poor girl know whatever happened between Nana and him , my mom said .

After I was almost at the point of collapsing at work today, my father had sent his driver to bring me back home, and he wasn't finding it any funny that Lydia had showed me pictures of Kamal and Safeeerah.

"Well, an office is not a place to gossip if she was doing her job, she won't be showing Nana stupid pictures" my Dad snapped.
"Please... Lydia is not to be blamed here, she was checking through her phone and commented about some couples looking cute, I was the one who requested to see it" I explained looking at my Dad and Mom.

"Truly, Lydia shouldn't be blamed and I think it's high time you get over this Kamal sickness" my brother voice replied, I turned immediately to see my mom holding her phone my brother's face occupied the screen he was still dressed in his office wears, meaning he had just returned from work.

"Exactly, you can't keep collapsing anytime you hear his name or see anything regarding to him" my dad added, if I was wondering where my brother got his attitude of speaking bluntly then I know where to look.
"You people should...
"Please mum,we are her family and we are the only one that can pull her out of whatever she's trying to put herself in" Ibrahim replied cutting my mother off.

"Like I said earlier,I know this is hard and you won't forget it for the rest of your life,but please get over it you are not a kid there are other good people apart from Kamal, please Aisha" my brother added his tone sounding calm at the end.

"Okay, I will try" I replied, that was the only thing I could manage to say, I don't think I would ever get over Kamal for the rest of my life, I remember a lot about him,even the little things, I shouldn't.

"Kareemah , is already asleep she sleeps early these days" My brother said changing the discussion ,I was grateful for it.
"She needs to sleep, being pregnant is a big deal, but you men won't know, you think it's easy carrying that big tummy around" my mom replied.

I chuckled softly and Ibrahim laughed too, " you women and exaggerations"
"If it's about exaggeration, she's on the top list" my dad said pointing at my mom.
"One time your mom, requested for pounded yam, with the excuse that the baby wanted it, I have not seen someone as creative as pregnant women" he added.

Ibrahim laughed again, rhyming with my own laughter too, I looked at mom shaking my head , she hissed loudly in reply "the baby actually requested for it,how would you know?, It's not inside you"

"Okay oo, like the time the baby asked me to give you money too, to prove I loved him right?, that time you were carrying Areef".

"The baby said that also, leave me alone Abdul- Malik" my Mom replied.

I and Ibrahim watched their childish exchange, mum and Dad are interesting to watch.

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I had finished the rest of the week, without thinking too much about Kamal at all, even though their wedding pictures was scattered online I only gave it one glance and swipe it away.

I was grateful Lydia didn't bring the up the incident that happened,she knew I and Kamal attended the same University ,she must have put pieces together and knew there was an history between us, Lydia was smart.
When I thought the week couldn't more interesting, Mrs Ahmad came to our house, talking about how Faizah failed to get pregnant.

"She's just eating and spending my son's money, that girl" Mrs Ahmad had complained.
My mom gave her the perfect reply , "it's God that gives children so I would advise you to calm down and stop disturbing the couples."

I understand Mrs Ahmad, she had given birth to only Abdul-Rahman, the first pregnancy she had was a miscarriage, the second turned out like the first one too, the third was only the one that stayed and that was Abdul Rahman,my Mom had told me the story,she had struggled after to give birth to another one but none came, thank God her husband loved her,he didn't even bother to take in another wife , it's actually a lot ,so I understand why she wanted Faizah to get pregnant.

My phone ranged loudly, I walked back to my room as the voice of my mom and Mrs Ahmad faded.
"Salam alaykum , it's Farid" he said even though I don't have his number saved on my new phone I know the last digits of his number.

"Wa alaykum Salam, looked who finally called after a year" I teased.
"A year keh, we still saw each other three weeks ago,if not because I didn't get your contact early I would have called" he explained calmly.
"I know I was just teasing you, so how's school?" I asked.

“Ahh!, Won fe pami die loku” Farid replied switching to Yoruba immediately.
I laughed loudly, for someone who could speak English perfectly his heavy Yoruba dialect was funny.
"Don't tell me you laughing at me speaking Yoruba again, that was the way Soffiyah said I speak Yoruba like ancient ones, funny right?" Farid replied chuckling.

"Soffiyah??, I asked my tone sounding as if I was jealous, No I was not, Farid was a brother to me very much younger than me , there was no reason to get riled up by a certain nobody named Soffiyah maybe the "S" words was taking a lot from me , and I now hate it.

"She's just a friend," Farid replied, sounding as if she shouldn't have mentioned soffiyah in the first place.

"Oh okay, thanks for calling we will talk later ,mom needs me to accompany her somewhere" I lied wanting to end the awkward conversation.

"Okay, help me greet her" Farid replied.
Dropping the phone on my bed, I held my head.
"I'm surely going nuts,I can't possibly like like Farid"

Chapter 19.

I was at the office when Ibrahim called, "Salam alaykum Diamond" he said his voice showing excitement.

"Wa alaykum Salam ya akhi" I replied smiling too, Lydia turned all her focus on me winking playfully.
"How are you, how's work?" He asked.
"Alhamdulillah and you?"
"Alhamdulillah ,we thank God, Kareemah has given birth— a baby boy" he said, I imagined how he was smiling why saying it, my brother had a gap teeth so his smile was lovely.

"Boy! , Oh my God, Alhamdulillah" I shouted at the top of my voice, Lydia stared at me with a frown on her face, I realized how loud I was when I noticed the people whose office were close to ours, staring at me too.

"Sorry" I mouthed looking at Lydia.
"Congratulations" I whispered softly to my brother again.
"Thank you Aisha, let me call our parents to tell them the good news" he replied.

"Okay , alright, I will call you later so I can talk to Kareemah, Ma Salam!"
Ma Salam , the call went off immediately.

"So..., that's your brother?" Lydia asked.
"Yeah who do you expect" I teased.
"Me, thinking it was one hot guy you just met, and he has a nice voice oo, manly voice...
"Please Lydia, better start asking for God's forgiveness ,a married man oo" I replied cutting her off.
"Ehn ehn!, the fact that you people are even Muslims, can't he marry another wife?" Lydia said again.

I nodded my head , well she was right but as for me oo, I can't be a second wife,I don't even see myself being one.

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We are all packed in the living room of my brother's place, including Abdul-Rahman and his parents, the naming ceremony was going to take place tomorrow, and everyone had arrived, even Kareemah's parents and some of her siblings.

"I'm going out,this place is too loud to write" Salma told me as she walked out of the living room, she was in SS3 and it's one month to her jamb exam, mom didn't want her to come, but Salma had insisted saying will mom deny her of seeing her brother's first son, it was a case of emotional blackmail, she and Areef successfully convinced mom to accompany us to Abuja.

The baby was crying again, Ibrahim immediately stood up rushing to the direction of his room.

Mum and the rest of us laughed at him, "he's new to this, I understand why he's rushing to go check on the baby" Mum said.

"He has not seen anything yet, he should wait until the baby wake up and start crying at night, Abdul Rahman use to do that a lot" Mrs Ahmad replied.

We all laughed again, Abdul-Rahman didn't find it funny, he stared at me as I laughed, I stopped immediately looking at him.
"To think, she will later fall asleep, and I will be the one taking over" Mr Ahmad said. My dad and mom laughed again, I didn't laugh ignoring Abdul-Rahman stare.

Amidst their laughter, My brother descended the stairs followed by Kareemah who held the baby protectively, she smiled at us as she made herself comfortable beside Ibrahim, who placed his hand on her lap.

"The baby just woke up" he said looking at us.

"Someone would think something happened with the way you rushed upstairs" Mrs Babatunde replied she was Kareemah's mom.

"Abi oo, latest daddy" Mrs Ahmad joked, we all laughed again, Ibrahim touched his head smiling shyly.

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We had returned to our suite after leaving Abdul Rahman's house we would return there tomorrow for the naming ceremony, we didn't want to be an inconvenience to the couple.

I had a whole big room to myself,Areef stayed with Salma , they are both annoying so it's good they stay together,my parents occupied one, Mrs Ahmad and Mr Ahmad also got one room, Abdul-Rahman and his wife had one too.
Kareemah's mom had a relative in Abuja, so she went their family member.

I wanted to read but I couldn't concentrate, so I went outside with my phone and sat by the pool, yes our private suite had a pool, I love it.

I noticed Farid was online, I texted him and he replied later, asking if I was interested in a video call, I agreed, and few minutes later I was showing him the pool and the hotel, the light in their hostel went off, and we decided to end the call.

"Good night Farid" I said as he chuckled softly, saying Good night.

I smiled softly staring at the pool.
"Are you sure there's nothing going on between you and this boy" A voice startled me from behind, I know who it was but I turned slowly to look at him, Abdul Rahman was dressed in shorts and a casual top, the first time he wasn't dressing corporate.

"I thought you have a wife, why are you sneaking around" I replied ignoring his question.

"Nana!" He called , placing a vibration on the N, I hate and was amazed with the way he calls it.

"I should be asking you, why you left your room to talk to a boy here" he added chuckling softly.

"It's none of your business" I replied standing up to leave.

He moved swiftly standing in front of me "I asked a question, I'm an elder to to you, so answer my question."
"I will push you if you don't move away from my front, what's your problem, if you put this effort in your marriage your wife would have become pregnant" I replied, realising what I said I moved back staring at Abdul-Rahman who frowned and changed his expression to normal again.

"Well, at least I'm not like the fool who got you pregnant and tried to abort it" he replied, I held my chest looking at him, tears threatening to fall.
"You are stupid" I shot back stepping away from him, the only thing I want right now is to go to my room and cry.

"Nana, I'm sorry, I was just trying to look out for you, you shouldn't allow anybody to deceive you again" he uttered.

"How's calling or talking to Farid related to boys deceiving me, the boy just resumed school, he shouldn't be two years older than Salma, he's a younger brother to me, I can see you don't get it yet, something must definitely be wrong with you, maybe you can't possibly get someone pregnant" I replied, though my come back was not that good, it brought out an emotion out of him, I walked back to my room leaving him standing there.

Chapter 20.

It's a day to new year and the workers were happy because the office closes a day before New year , and resume the third week in January, that was three weeks holiday, three weeks to rest, my mind echoed.

"Aisha , how's it going?" Lydia asked walking towards me. We are yet to balance the account for all the sales made this year, Lydia was collating the loss and profit, and I was busy making sure the figures matched with the total amount we were supposed to arrive at.

"It's going well, I think we would be done before 8:00" I replied looking at the time it was 7:40.

"Thank God, I have to go to church" she said not lifting her head from her computer.

"I'm almost done, if not because of the stupid report that the sales department gave us at first, this would have been over" I replied hissing in annoyance.

"As in, and they already left, I wish I can hold them down, or tamper with the elevator" Lydia replied I know how going to Church was important for her.

Sending everything to the company's email I smiled , winking at Lydia.

"Tell me we can go home now" she said looking at me.

"No, I just discovered there's a big thing we omitted again" I teased, my face looking serious.

"Oh my God, so we can't go home now" Lydia replied,she looked as if she would cry anytime soon.

I laughed loudly looking at her "I was only kidding, let's go home.

"If I catch you" she said throwing a cover of her pen at me, I dodged still laughing as a message notification entered.

I stared at the message it was from Abdul Rahman, the last time I talked with him was at My brother's naming ceremony and that was last year. The message was short but it looked quite suspicious.

Salam alaykum dear, how are you doing?

Abdul-Rahman in his right senses would never call me dear, I hissed loudly putting the phone back in my bag.
"Everything okay?" Lydia asked looking concerned.
"Yes, let's go home" I replied picking up my bag.

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I sat in the living room of my parent's house staring at them, the silence was killing me, if they have anything to say they better say it.
My father cleared his throat, I will put a call through to your brother I want him to be here when I say this" he said glaring at me.

I looked at my mom for help, she looked at me and focused back on the TV, *when the did she even start watching TV*. My dad had called me after Subhi prayer telling me he had something to talk about and now that they were about to tell me I was getting impatient and nervous.

"Salam alaykum sir, is Aishat already there" my brother asked his voice sounding louder from the phone.
"Yes she's here" my dad replied turning the camera towards me.

"If Ibrahim knew about this, then that means, it was definitely important" I thought looking at my brother.

"Salam alaykum Diamond" he said waving and smiling at me.
"Wa alaykum Salam" I replied eager to know what the problem is.

"So ,you are not a baby and I would just get it straight with you, you are getting married" my Dad said.
What???, I stood up staring at my Dad , Mom and Ibrahim , they looked calm I was the only one who was shocked.
"Yes, you would be getting married to Abdul-Rahman as his second wife" he added again.

I get why they were not shocked, Mrs Ahmad and my Mom must be happy that I was finally going to get married to that fool."
"No, I'm not going to marry him" I said looking at them.
My father roared angry at my refusal "you are going to marry him and that's final, at least someone is taking you in"

I stepped back looking at them, they clearly don't know what they are saying, I even hate being in the same room with him.
"Aishat ,this is for the best, Abdul Rahman is a good guy , I'm not saying this because he's my friend ,he is clearly not going to treat you like trash, he's the only one I can trust you with" Ibrahim declared.

"Oh my God, you people don't get it, Abdul-Rahman doesn't even want me, he does not like me " I shouted.
"Well he was the one who requested to marry you, even Aliyah was shocked when he told her" my mom replied calmly.

"What??" I exclaimed again receiving my second shock.

"*I guess , this year was different, I got two surprises from my parents"*

Turning angrily I ascended the stairs and fled to my room, not forgetting to lock the door behind.
"Marry Abdul Rahman my foot!"

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"I didn't know how long I slept, but I had cried myself to sleep"
My head hurts with an headache that wasn't there before, picking my phone to check the time it was 3:00, I had slept for two hours.

I decided to call Abdul Rahman, surprisingly he picked immediately.
"Nana, I have been expecting you to call, but it took you so long, Salam alaykum" he uttered in his annoying voice.

"You should be, since you have done something wrong " I replied sounding irritated.
"Something wrong??, I only gave you a new year gift, you don't like it" he said sounding amused, I know his stupid dimple must have shown on his cheek.

"Abdul Rahman, this is not funny, I know you are angry with what I said to you the last time we met, I don't want to marry you , tell our parents you didn't know what you were saying"

"Aishat!, what you are asking me is beyond me, I requested to marry you truly,but now it's beyond me, our parents are now involved, he replied.

"What were you even thinking, I don't want to get married to you" .
"And I want to get married to you, it's that simple, be expecting us soon" he chuckled and ended the call immediately.

Becoming Abdul-Rahman's wife

Chapter 21

Abdul Rahman

I was not attracted to Aisha, She was beautiful and all, but I have always seen her as my little sister, she thought I hated her, but I was only trying to help her so she doesn't get married to someone that didn't love her which was me.

Faizah walked into the bedroom dissuading my thoughts, I turned slowly looking at her,Faizah was beautiful, I had met her during my NYSC, it was not a case of love at first sight, she was part of the socialites and everybody knew her, that time she was always covering her head with a cap/scarf she only wear Hijab on Fridays.

I was not close to her then, she was definitely not the kind of woman I wanted, she was beautiful, smart and had a great smile, but there was something missing

As if fated by Allah, I met her at one of the conference organized by a tech company, I was invited as the guest speaker, I remembered I had a meeting with one of our clients after the event, so immediately I delivered my speech I wanted to leave.

"Hello, Mr Ahmad" I heard a female voice calling me from behind, stopping in my tracks I turned and Faizah stood there dressed in a suit, her scarf tied on her head, her long braids dropping to her shoulders.

"Hey" I said trying to remember her name.
"it's Faizah from camp, NYSC camp" she replied.

"Oh, I remembered we attended camp together I only forgot your name" I explained my dimple gracing my face.

"Yeah it's possible, since you don't want to move with people like us" she accused smiling to cover it up.

"and what's wrong with people like you?" I replied, throwing her under the bus.

"I ...," She stopped immediately staring at me.

"It's fine, it's nice to see you again, I have an important meeting" I replied trying to leave.

"Oh I guess you are in a hurry, can I have your number if you don't mind" she said sounding nervous.

"Oh yeah" I replied collecting her phone and typing my number in it.

"Thank you so much, I enjoyed your speech so much, I knew you were intelligent" she uttered collecting her phone back from me.

"Okay," I replied, it was not pride or anything but I just don't know how to have unnecessary conversations with people, especially the ones I'm not close too, this was all Ibrahim's fault, funny but true the guy only talks when he feels like and when he does he only says one word.

"One time, a friend once asked us if we were going to be charged for the amount of words we speak, it was a funny question, but I and Ibrahim just smiled."

"Have a nice day" Faizah said bringing me back from my thoughts.

"Yeah, Ma Salam!" I replied walking away without turning back.

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I had just finished a virtual call with one of our biggest clients, when a call from an unknown number came in.

I had ignored the call thrice knowing it was probably all this people that got my number somehow, it's mostly females , some of them telling me how good I look.

The person called again, this time around I grabbed my phone , ready to give the person a piece of my mind.

"Hello" a female voice said, just like I guessed, I was about to say something the , when the person spoke out again.
"It's Faizah, I hope I'm not disturbing you."
"Yes you are, I just finished working and it's time for solah" I replied glancing at my wristwatch, I didn't know how to pretend, pretending was not something we do, it was Ibrahim's motto every time.

"Oh okay" Faizah answered I noticed a glimpse of sadness in her voice.

Trying not to make a fellow Muslim feel bad I replied
" I will save your number, you can call me back in the next one hour, if you call, say Salam alaykum" I said laughing softly.

Faizah also laughed as she said "no problem, I will call you later then, I should pray too"
"Yeah you should, it's not that hard if you do it all the time..."

That was where it all started ,I didn't even know how, the only thing I knew was , I was getting married to Faizah and we would be living together as husband and wife.

"You and Aisha?" Faizah pointed out not trying to hide her emotions.

"what happened to I and Aisha?" I replied staring back at her, Faizah looked really different she wasn't the one I fell in love with, who tried very hard to increase her faith and dress properly.

I remembered the way she was smiling when she first wore Abaya and Hijab.

"Habibi, can't you see it looks better than my scarf and cap?" She had asked turning round in front of the mirror.

"Yeah it does you look good, mashallah" I replied smiling back.

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"Answer me Abdul-Rahman, you and Aisha" she repeated again.
"You haven't answered me either, what's wrong again with I and Aisha?"

"Everything's wrong , not that girl please, what would happen to me if you get married to her, it's obvious everyone in your family likes her especially your Mom, one would think she gave birth to her" Faizah explained.
"And who said you don't have a place in my family because you clearly meant that my family members hate you."

"It's the truth, since I haven't been able to give birth she has been behaving somehow, she believe I'm the problem here" Faizah said.

"So who's now the problem?, Is it not you Faizah, who can't conceive again?, Is it not you, why are you not smiling and trying to support me, this is hard for me too, I can't believe you have been deceiving me this whole time." I replied getting angry.

"Abdul Rahman?!, Faizah called between hiccups staring at me as tears filled up her eyes.
"I'm sorry but you know this is to make things better"

"Make things better? How did you want the do that by marrying someone that has aborted a pregnancy, how's she different from me?" Faizah shouted, I shifted back surprised by her sudden outburst.

"Subhanallah, what was that for?" I replied calmly, touching my hair.

Chapter 22.

Aishat

"Nana, this will absolutely look good on you" My mom said holding the Gold fabric for me to see.

"Umm" I said nodding in acceptance, I was not suppose to be here, sitting down and planning a wedding I believe won't happen, I'm definitely going to force Abdul-Rahman to call it off"

"If you like the colour then it's decided you would be wearing it for your Nikkah, this gold really complimented your skin colour, I love it" Mrs Ahmad squeaked excitedly like an highschool girl.

I smiled looking back at her, everyone was happy that I would be marrying Abdul Rahman, it was what they wanted and it happened, even Salma who I thought was on my side, that sly, she was the first person to suggest the hall we should use for the wedding, "I will be performing a poem that day" she had said grinning widely.

I was about to excuse myself when the doorbell rang "Are you expecting anybody?" I asked turning to my mom.

"Yeah it should be my son, He's coming to check the color we chose,so his fashion designer can buy the exact same colour too. My Mom replied calmly.

"Your son, as in my brother?, why didn't you guys tell me he was coming home" I replied rushing over to open the door.

Wait, it's not ...

"Akhi" I shouted opening the door , standing by the door was Abdul Rahman, dressed in a grey coloured native, he smiled at me his dimple taking over, to add to his cuteness.

"Those stupid dimples" I mumbled under my breath stepping back for him to enter.
"Her brother's diamond" he said looking at me.

"Huh?"
"Diamond, is that not what Ibrahim calls you, see the way you frowned your face immediately you realised I was the one standing here, am I that ugly?" He replied.

"Please, brother Abdul-Rahman, I thought you were here for something else, step inside when you are ready I'm going to my room." I said taking a step forward.

"I guess you expected your brother to be at the door not me, but it's fine, you will be seeing more of me soon though, since we would be living together as ...

"As nothing, we won't live together, you will go in there and tell mum , you are not interested again."

Abdul Rahman laughed loudly looking at me "I can't do that Nana."

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Abdul Rahman

I had returned back to Oshogbo after spending the weekend in Oyo, the wedding plan was going faster than normal, all thanks to Mom and Aishat's mom ,if they want to venture into any other business, they should go for event planning.

"You are back" Faizah said walking into the living room.

" I'm back??" I repeated looking at her.

She ignored my question as she continued speaking again "you saw her right?, she must be so happy to see you too"

I shook my head looking at Faizah, I should have just stayed away from her when she started pushing herself towards me, the truth is Faizah never changed, she was just curbing her true colours to reveal it at a time when she thinks she's not getting what she want, which is now!.

"Faizah, Salam alaykum" I replied, walking to the direction of our room.

My phone rang loudly as I stepped into the room, Faizah must have stayed back in the living room,since she didn't follow me in.
"Salam alaykum" A deep voice greeted.

"Wa alaykum Salam, how can I help you?"

"It's Kamal..."

"Kamal?, which Kamal please" I repeated.

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Kamal was exhausted for the day, the only thing on his mind was to go home and get a good sleep.
"Salam alaykum" he greeted using his spare key to open the door, there was no reply so he guessed Safeeerah must be sleeping.

"Subhanallah" he shouted looking at the sight before him, all the pillows on the couch, which he had arranged in the morning was left on the floor, the TV was on, blaring loudly, to add to it there were plates of left over food on the table.

"Safeeerah!" He shouted climbing the stairs in anger, he had perfectly arranged and swept that living room before going for work"

Stepping into the bedroom, the only thing on the bed was a pile of clothes, which belonged to his wife, she must have ransacked through her wardrobe again,and out of laziness had left it on the bed.

"Safeeerah, are you in the restroom?" Kamal asked again,this time around he removed his tie dropping it on the bed.

"Safeeerah, if you are at home, come and pack all the rubbish you did here, for God sake ,what are you even doing through out the day" he said again, there was no sign of Safeeerah, he walked into the restroom and still she wasn't there, he was about to go back downstairs to check her in the kitchen when he saw a note.

Heyy!, it's my friend's birthday and we are having a party tonight it's going to go on till tomorrow morning, help me pack my clothes I left it on the bed

Bye

Kamal hissed in annoyance touching his head, he would definitely lose it anytime soon, this was not the first time Safeeerah did something like this.

"Who even leaves a note in the 23rd century!" He shouted at nothing in particular ,his image staring back at him in the mirror.

"I'm really tired, would I start cleaning again" he mumbled looking at the bedroom it wasn't different from the living room, if not that he swept it himself this morning,you would think it has not been tidied up for a year.

"Sitting on the bed, he picked up his phone to call Safeeerah."

"Hello darling!!" Safeeerah shouted into the phone, music was blasting from wherever she was.

"Can you leave that noisy place for a bit, and don't darling me" Kamal replied.

"I can't, we are going to dance with the celebrant soon, and POV , I use darling for everybody so don't think you are special" Safeeerah replied.

"Safeeerah if you don't...

The call went off immediately.
"Did she just hang up on me?" He asked dropping his phone on the bed.

He stared at the ceiling, he had two things to do, sleep or tidy the house.

"My eyes are heavy I really need that sleep" he complained again, walking into the restroom he emerged with a vacuum cleaner and a change of clothes.

"I guess I have to clean" he mumbled to himself.

Chapter 23

Abdul-Rahman

"You better not be marrying Sis Aisha to satisfy your ego or for other selfish reasons" Farid warned.

I chuckled softly, "don't tell me the first time you are going to call me on phone, it's just to threaten me?"

"Don't divert from the main discussion." He replied.
"Farid!, one thing I'm assured of is that if I marry Aishat she would never come to you crying." I replied.

"You better be telling the truth, I don't know why you even made the decision of marrying her." Farid replied hanging up immediately.
I tossed the phone on the table,my usual attitude of hanging up on people paining me after Farid did the same.

Farid was right, why did I even made the decision of getting married to her, it was definitely for selfish reasons, I could remember what happened in Abuja,when she bluntly told me I couldn't get someone pregnant, maybe it was to prove her wrong. No it wasn't that, was I attracted to Aishat?, I don't even know. A knock sounded on my door dissuading me from my thoughts.

"Come in" I said, the door opened slowly revealing Toyin, my secretary.

"Good afternoon sir, Mr Babatunde is here to see you."

"As in Babatunde Kamal?, I can't believe he came all the way from Lagos to see me" I mocked.

"Sir, our ratings will increase if we work with them, I'm hoping you won't do anything harsh" Toyin said looking at me with pleading eyes.
"Our ratings huh?, What if we don't work with them, it won't affect anything right?" I replied.

"Please sir we...

"Toyin, bring our visitor in, and stop it, I didn't ask for your opinion."
"Alright sir, sorry sir" Toyin said storming out of the office.

"Today is definitely going to be interesting."

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The door opened again few minutes after Toyin left, I pretended to be engrossed with my laptop, without raising my head I knew it was Kamal who walked in.

"Good morning sir" he greeted, his voice sounding the same as that day , anger rising inside me . *I gave her abortion pills right, then prove it...*

"Good morning" I replied raising my head slowly trying to make a good show.

"You!" Kamal asked looking surprised, what are you doing here he added again.
This guy must definitely be foolish, how did Aishat end up with the fool, who asks, what a person is doing in his own office.

"Mr Babatunde,why are you so surprised to see me in my office?, were you expecting a lady?" I joked looking at his confused face.

"I thought I was meeting another person here, I'm just surprised.
"Well have a seat, we should proceed with what you came here for".
"Okay so, we are planning on creating a website where our clients...

"I know, all about that already, why do you think we should work with you?" I replied cutting him off, if I should hear his voice one more time I would probably lose it.

"Our company is ...
"I know, but what about you, can you be trusted?" I replied interrupting him again.
Kamal went silent looking at me, he knew what he had done to Aishat, his face went pale looking disturbed.

"We don't have all day" I replied enjoying this.
"Mr Ahmad, you should know we don't mix personal issues with business"

I laughed loudly looking at him, "who's mixing it?, I asked you a question can you be trusted, you are here on behalf of your company isn't it?, won't I know the kind of person I'm working with?, Or wait , you can't be trusted, a killer can't be trusted." I said staring back at Kamal.

"What do you mean, w...hat are you try..ing to.... say?" He stammered.

"It means we can't work with you, get out!" I shouted.

"You are saying this based on what happened, you should know better that this is going to help both companies, you know it , don't allow..."

"I swear by Allah's name, if you don't disappear from my office I would show you what I'm made of" I replied standing up.

Kamal packed his documents from the table , avoiding my face he walked straight to the door.
"One more thing, just know that once you leave my office you can't sign this deal elsewhere, it's not a threat it's the truth."

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"Salam alaykum" Kamal greeted as he stepped into the living room, Safeeerah was seated on one of the sofa directly facing the door, she must have been waiting for him.

"Welcome, I hope you are happy after wasting the company's money to go to Oshogbo and then return with stupid shit about our offer being rejected." Safeeerah accused ignoring how tired Kamal looked.

"Who told you, we didn't finalize the deal?" He asked looking surprised.

Safeeerah laughed loudly looking at Kamal "I think you have a very low IQ, if you have forgotten let me refresh your memory, that position you are clearly enjoying in my mother's company is mine" she replied.

"Safeeerah, please I have had a very disturbing day, you can't come and add to it again." Kamal said.

"You dare not leave while I'm not done yet, it's like you don't understand what this is all about, if we are unable to finalize this deal with them, it's going to affect our public image, who's going to sort it out if we start losing our clients, we need to get him on our side"

"Did I said I didn't try , he clearly stated he's not going to sign the deal."
"He will sign it, he's getting married next month, so this is an opportunity to get close to their family, we would attend the wedding I'm already working with someone to help me get the wedding invitation." Safeeerah replied standing up.

"And one more thing, don't blow this up, think of it as a compensation for living off my parent's wealth" she added patting Kamal on his shoulder.
"I thought, Mr Ahmad was married, who is he getting married to?" Kamal asked.

"Out of everything I said,the only thing you understand was the marriage part, well he's getting married to one Aishat, she attended the same University as yours,you may or may have not seen her before, anyways I'm happy for them,that girl is beautiful,her skin,oh my God, I should probably ask for her skincare routine" Safeeerah said blabbing all the way as she ascended the stairs.

"Aishat" Kamal repeated, touching his forehead.
"How will he face Aisha and what will he say if he sees her"

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"Rofiat,you know that marriage part wasn't clearly my fault oo, they just threw a marriage proposal to my chest and immediately ask me to accept it, boom!!, preparations started and now the date has been fixed" I replied.

"Well I would say you should be happy, getting married into that family, am I the only one that loves how Mrs Ahmad treats you she clearly loves you so much, even if you have an argument with Abdul-Rahman she's taking your side." Rofiat stated, I have missed her so much, if there's something Rofiat was good at it was giving good advice.

"I don't know why Abdul Rahman made the decision of getting married to you,but he's ready to make this work, even before you called me ,he already told me he was going to propose marriage to you, everyone deserves an happy ending don't you think?" Rofiat said holding my hands.

"I agree with Sister Rofiat, this is an happy ending, you are getting married to an handsome prince, he even has a dimple, cute dimples" Salma replied looking as if she was lost in her own fairy tale, I blame this on all the romance novels she has been reading.

"You better stop reading this your fairy tale novels, it's already affecting your brain" I replied poking her.

"Ouch!, don't you know that's painful" Salma replied touching her forehead.

I laughed loudly looking at her face expression, Rofiat joined in too, maybe they were right, if this was going to work out then I think I'm in.

Chapter 24.

Aishat

I had woke up in the morning feeling empty, even though I ate yesterday night it felt as if I had eaten for a long time, I was not praying,and when my alarm woke me up for solah , I hissed and off it, rolling to the other side of the bed.

I yawned loudly checking the time, it was 7:00, my dad and mom will still be in their room probably sleeping,cos they usually wake up early, perform tahjud till Subhi prayer and then sleep afterwards, I would definitely love to be like them but I love a good sleep.

Descending the stairs I heard people whispering in the living room, I knew Areef would be the one in the living room, but who else is he whispering with, he and Salma are cat and rat so they can't probably stay in the same place and be whispering without arguing or fighting.

"Areef, who's there with you in the living room?" I asked placing my feet on the last step.

"Hide she's coming" Areef whispered to the person with him.

"Shut up, are they not hiding like that" Salma shot back.

I chuckled softly, I was right, Areef and Salma will always argue, with their little brawling I now know there are two people or more with them in the living room.

"Salma, I know you are there too, what are you guys up to?" I asked again. Salma popped out from nowhere smiling at me.

"We were just playing, right?" She said turning to Areef who was now standing beside her too, a mischief grin on their face.

"Yeah, Hide and seek, it was Salma turn to hide." He said looking straight into my eyes.

"Hide and seek by this time?" I asked my stomach growling in agreement.

Salma and Areef laughed ,and I swear that I also heard a chuckle from behind the big sofa in the living room.

"I'm hungry, so what did you expect my stomach to do, that's the main reason why I'm here, tell your accomplice to come out, if I go to the kitchen I'm coming back with a frying pan, and I will hit their heads with it" I threatened walking to the Kitchen.

"You will be hitting a lot of heads then, please add Areef own too, maybe he would have more sense" Salma replied.

"My head or your head, you are the one who clearly needs more sense" Areef shot back.

I laughed loudly looking at them, they were not going to stop anytime soon, stepping into the kitchen, I proceeded to cook noodles and fry plantain.

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"Nothing" Salma replied.

"Come and sit here too, Areef beckoned shifting a little.

"Okay!!?" I replied taking my seat.
I ate my noodles in silence with Salma glancing at me everytime, even Areef volunteered to help me take water from the fridge, there was definitely someone hiding behind the big sofa, I was on my last bite of plantain when someone poked me from behind.

Farid stood behind me smiling, he clearly told me he was at the hostel yesterday night.
"Hey, are you not happy to see me?" He said.
"Of course not!" I replied picking a pillow from the sofa and throwing it at him.

"Ouch, but you still need to put more effort on the throwing it wasn't that painful" he teased.

"Well we shall see about that" I picked up another pillow as someone held my hand, I knew that scent, it was definitely Ibrahim.
"Diamond, stop behaving like a baby, don't scatter the living room" he said releasing my hand.

"And you?, I said pointing the pillow at him, what are you doing here"
"The last time I checked this is our parent's house, I'm family too" he replied laughing loudly.

"Now it's funny, why wasn't I informed that you both were coming, especially this stone head." I accused looking at Farid.
"It's a surprise, are you not happy to see us" Farid said.

"Don't mind her, she's the one getting married tomorrow and she's here asking us what we are doing here, who would keep Abdul Rahman's company if not us" my brother replied.

"Oh, it's true though, but I was thinking you guys were going to arrive in the evening." I said.
"Change of plans, Abdul-Rahman left Oshogbo yesterday, and we had to fly in today, told Farid and he said he was available too."

"Well, we were suppose to come afterwards just see it as arriving early" Farid replied.
"Let me go and greet mom and Dad, Farid let's go" Ibrahim said.

"I will talk with you later" Ibrahim added walking away.
"Wait it's my wedding tomorrow??" I said softly.

"Yeah, it's your wedding, don't you think we should get ready too, I hope you didn't forget about our Girl's hangout and Henna party tonight" Salma said dragging me toward the stairs.

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Abdul Rahman

"This is perfect definition of husband material" Ibrahim praised patting my back.

"Seriously, we are all supposed to get paid, since this is the second wedding we are attending as your friends" Abdul-Malik joked he was one of my close friends too from Uni.

"Get paid khor, you people are not happy you have a chance to enjoy,no be work work work everyday" I joked back in pidgin, Ibrahim's hand now resting on my shoulder.

"You better treat my sister very well, we are friends but that doesn't mean I won't remove your head off if you make her cry" Ibrahim said smiling.

"I know, since you and one guy here has been threatening me from day one, I will treat her well, do I look like a monster to you" I replied smiling back at Ibrahim.

"Well, my brother is not, so I trust you completely, but this is my sister so I need to take up the brotherly role again, she has been through a lot and this time around we don't want her crying again."

"He dare not make her cry" Farid said standing beside me, I didn't know where he popped out from, he was clearly the one I should take his threat serious.

"I promise, Aishat would be happy" I said.

"Oko iyawo looking fit and handsome" Abdul Samad hailed.

I chuckled softly, "you people should stop teasing me please"
"Who's teasing you, everybody come together let me take a picture" Abdul Samad replied.

Chapter 25.

The wait was over, I was sitting beside Abdul-Rahman who was there in the same colour of my dress, Mrs Ahmad was right Gold really complimented my skin.

Abdul-Rahman had been taking glances at me and giving me reassuring smile, I guess my facial expression was screaming it all. Faizah sat with Mrs Ahmad on the groom side, her parents were there too, whatever was going on in their mind I don't even know.

"Aisha stop looking around, they are talking to us here" Abdul Rahman replied pointing at the cleric - Imam Abdul-Azeez who was saying something about duties of wives to husband, can we just end this quickly.

"Oh, okay" I replied turning my head back to the cleric.
"Don't worry he has ten minutes more, and then you are free from him" Abdul-Rahman said winking playfully.

I put my hand on my mouth trying not to laugh "Don't try that again, winking is not for you" I replied softly.
Abdul-Rahman phone beeped, signalling a message notification, he checked it and smile again turning his head to where his mum was, she gave him a side eye and he still smiled, his dimple appearing.

"Mum said we are distracting everybody" he said showing me the content of the message.
I nodded my head and returned my concentration back to the cleric, who was now rounding up his speech, I guess that's it I'm married!!!.
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Abdul Rahman

After Imam Abdul-Azeez ended his speech, I and Aishat stood up to go and greet him, since he would be leaving immediately, he was a son to the founder of the Arabic school we attended, when I say we, I meant Ibrahim and I including his siblings.
He was the one who joined us together during my first Nikkah, he did Ibrahim's own too and now my second marriage.

"Salam alaykum sir" I greeted as he extend his hands towards me, he is clearly humble and doesn't have pride."

"Wa alaykum Salam waramatullah wabarakatuh" he replied shaking my hands.
"Thank you for being here today , it's an honour"
"I'm happy to be here, the fact that you are marrying one of my my most brilliant female student, Aishat is a good girl" he replied.

"Salam alaykum sir, thank you sir" Aishat said.
"Wa alaykum Salam, May Allah bless your Union, you both will make good couples" he prayed.
"Amin, I and Aishat answered in unison"

He was about to say something else when one of his student walked up to him whispering something in his ears, he nodded his head as his phone rang.
"I need to go, I have to be somewhere important" he said putting his phone back in his pocket.

"Alright sir, thank you so much for coming" I replied.
"It's nothing, Abdul-Rahman take care of your wife there's no need to walk me out, ma Salam!".

My mom appeared walking with one of the servers, "he's leaving so fast, his souvenirs, he shouldn't forget it" she said hurriedly walking out of the hall.I turned slowly to Aisha smiling.
Her eyes were fixated somewhere else she was looking at Farid arguing with Faizah's Dad, ,they haven't met before so why are they arguing?, maybe he said something bad about Aisha and he was only trying to defend her.

"Not today Farid" Aisha said walking towards them , I followed immediately their voices getting more louder.
"I didn't come here for you, just pretend you didn't see me, now you know your sister has a son" Farid shouted. I held Aisha hand telling her not to take another step.

"If not for that fool that you call a Dad, Fatimah would still be alive, He led her to his death" Faizah's Dad replied.

"Don't call my father a fool, he's 20 times better than you, at least he didn't live off his parent's wealth, everything my father has, he worked for it , unlike you!" Farid snapped again.

"You!.."
"That's enough!" I shouted looking at Aishat whose eyes were already looking teary."

"What's the meaning of all this, at least you would postpone this to when you leave this hall, are you here to fight?" I asked looking at both of them.

"I'm sorry, Brother Abdul-Rahman, but please tell this man I don't know him , he should stop following me and asking me questions." Farid said.

One look at Faizah's Dad and Farid they both look alike, who knew they were even family, what a a small world we live in

"You should be ashamed of yourself" Aishat blurted out looking at Faizah's Dad, holding Farid's hand , she dragged him away from us , I shook my head in disappointment, walking away.

After the little drama that Farid and Faizah's dad put up few hours ago, he left, if it's due to shame I don't even know.
Farid now stood with Salma and Areef they were engrossed in whatever they were discussing,at least he's in a good mood.

"Heyy Bride" Rofiat said hugging me from the side, she was dressed in lemon,that was the colour for the bride's maid and groom's men.

"Heyy, bride's bestie" I replied hugging her back.
"How are you?" She said smiling.
"I'm fine and you" I replied.
"you and your groom are too much" Rofiat praised,I turned my head to where Abdul-Rahman was standing with my brother and some of his friends, Farid had now shifted from Salma back to them.

"Indeed, at least we have greeted half of the people who came to celebrate with us, the remaining half can wait till later, I'm tired." I replied yawning loudly.

"Sorry, you will rest well when you get home... please oo, who's that" she asked looking at Faizah.
"She's Abdul-Rahman's first wife, what happened?" I asked.
"The way she has been looking at you, if she has something to say she should voice it out now" Rofiat replied. *Trust her to always say her mind.*

"Rofiat, don't start, leave her alone,I understand how she feels" I replied adjusting my hijab.
"Oh okay oo" Rofiat replied, as noise engulfed from where Abdul-Rahman was standing with his friends, someone was in their midst and looking at it the rest were holding Abdul-Rahman, my brother and Farid, from pouncing on the person.

"What's going on there?" I asked Rofiat as if she would know too.
"I think they are about to beat someone, let's go and check who made your calm brothers raise their fist" Rofiat joked.

"Calm indeed" I replied stepping closer to them.

"Stay away don't come here" Farid said looking at me.

"Aishat you won't dare take more step, just stay there" Ibrahim added.

"Listen to your brothers don't move" Abdul-Rahman said,who are they trying to hide and what's the problem.

"Salam alaykum, Aishat right, oh my God I love your outfit" a tiny voice said.
Looking at her, I recognized her face immediately, "Safeeerah?" I asked.
"Oh my God, you even know my name yes I'm Safeeerah" she replied smiling.
"Oh Kamal's wife,what are you doing here, and who gave you an invite?" Rofiat said walking towards Safeeerah.

"If you know what's good for you, I know Kamal is here and standing over there, if you don't want you and your husband to be beaten to a pulp, pack yourself and leave." Rofiat threatened.

"Ahh,what did I do, I only came here to celebrate, did you guys know Kamal before?" She asked.

"Security please walk her out, her husband has been thrown outside already,if she refused drag her out, I don't want to see their face near this hall" Ibrahim said.

"What did I do?, I only came here to congratulate you" she said, looking at the security face,she walked out hurriedly.

"Ode oshi" Rofiat abused in Yoruba.

"I wanted to laugh but I wasn't in the mood"

"Are you okay?" Ibrahim said holding my hand, he removed it again as Abdul-Rahman appeared.

"I'm fine , I just can't believe I was about to see the man who messed up my whole life" I replied.

"It's okay Aishat, he won't ever come back here again" Abdul Rahman said placing his hands on my waist.

"Yeah he won't" Farid reassured.

I sobbed softly looking at them, I have the
most sweetest people in the world, and they would do anything to protect me.

Chapter 26.

Abdul-Rahman

After the little brawl with Kamal and his wife, the party continued as if nothing happened, Aishat was moving from one person to another greeting them. I was supposed to do that with her,but Ibrahim and I along with Farid had been shuffled into the midst of old men.

By old men, yes I meant our dads and their group of friends dressed in Lilac coloured Agbada ,they were busy advising me on how to take care of my wives, to think I now have two wives, it's funny how people with just one wife are advising me on how to take care of two.

Ibrahim stood beside me finding everything amusing, Farid on the other hand was not concerned with everything that was being said, his expression was giving I'm not suppose to be here, which is actually true, the boy is still far from marriage talkless of being advised about it.

"I heard about what happened between you and my in- law " My Dad said turning to Farid who was now frowning.

"It's nothing sir, he wasn't expecting me to be here, we are not that close" Farid replied.

"It's not about not being close,he's your family so you have to talk to him.
"It's okay , leave the poor boy alone,we can't force their relationship,a lot has happened,he left him alone all this while" Aishat's Dad replied.

"It's better to not talk about this matter,this is not what Farid needs now." Ibrahim interfered.
"It's okay, I'm not expecting any help from him or the rest of his family members ,I won't just allow him to insult my dad, he's not even in the right place to do that" Farid replied.

No one mentioned anything about Farid again,the conversation was switched to business, and at one point during the conversation I saw him smile.

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"Please what's this?" Mrs Ahmad asked looking at the blue wallpaper in the room. Two days after our wedding all my luggage was moved to Oshogbo in the house where Abdul-Rahman and Faizah lived. my mom and Mrs Ahmad had stubbornly decided to follow us, Abdul-Rahman didn't have any choice so he had to allow them to have their way, Ibrahim and Kareemah had tagged along too, Farid was having test, and Rofiat was also battling with exams,so they couldn't come.

My Dad didn't want Salma and Areef to miss school again, so they had to stay back at home even though they wanted to be here so badly.
"Faizah was the one who bought the wallpaper,she said she was going to decorate the room, I didn't want it to look like I don't trust her,so I...

"Can you even hear what you are saying, you asked Faizah to decorate the room, who doesn't check the room their new wife is moving into, why are you behaving like a child, as if the Faizah is happy doing it" Mrs Ahmad nagged at her son.

"Aliyah, it's okay,we can just use the one we brought." My mom replied, I was not surprised though, that they had brought another wallpaper from Lagos, even though this sound somehow I know Faizah did this on purpose I don't blame her though,I would also be annoyed if I had to share my husband with someone else which was me.

"Aishat, I'm really sorry, I wasn't expecting the room to be like this, my own opinion was that she's a lady and she would have an idea of what you like instead of me doing it" Abdul-Rahman said turning to me.

"It's fine, blue is not definitely a colour I would want in my room" I replied.
"Don't mind him jhor, are you a boy?, why would you need a blue decor, Sha come and help us place the wallpaper at least you should make up for what you and your wife did, I wonder how your room is maybe it's decorated in blue too" Mrs Ahmad said.

I laughed loudly, looking at Abdul-Rahman who had a blank expression on his face, Mrs Ahmad can be funny at times.
"Aliyah it's fine, the boys will help us place the wallpaper, we can use that opportunity to arrange her clothes inside her wardrobe" my mom replied.

"I think that's everything" Ibrahim said carrying two of my travelling bags followed by Kareemah who was carrying their baby.
"Oh thank you, mum said you should help place the wallpaper they brought." I replied.

"Wait, mom brought a wallpaper all the way from Lagos" Ibrahim asked laughing loudly.
"Yes at least it's going to help us now, look at this room, Kareemah , how's this blue decor for you." My mom asked.

She laughed softly "it would have been better if it was a light shade of blue, but this is a no! No!" She replied still laughing.
"Thank you oo, can you see, this are good wives, not the ones that use blue decors for ...

"Aliyah!, Mum!" Abdul-Rahman and my Mom shouted at the same time.

"Okay oo, before you start saying my own is too much." She replied.

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I made myself comfortable on the bed, replying texts from Farid, Rofiat, and others, it was a relief they didn't call they must have understood I would probably be tired or busy.
"Can I come in?" Abdul Rahman asked knocking the door.

"That's a funny question, come in" I replied, standing up to put my scarf on my head.

"I have to ask, before you call me names" he replied still standing by the door.

"Yeahhhh, I think we are past all those ones, I can't possibly start calling my husband names." I replied trying to adjust my scarf on my head.

Ibrahim laughed loudly looking at me "why are you covering your hair from me"

"Well it's my hair, why can't I cover it?" I asked looking at him.
"You know I'm not forbidden to see your hair, unless you don't want me to see it maybe you are bald" he replied grinning.

"Did you just indirectly call me bald" I replied jumping from the bed throwing a pillow at him.

"I didn't say you were,but since you got offended by it maybe you are actually bald" he laughed again his dimple gracing his face.
"Stop saying I'm bald, I'm not I replied throwing the rest of my two pillows at him."

"Your reaction is saying another thing I can't believe you are..."
I walked towards him, placing my hands on his mouth "don't even say it again, I'm not bald, maybe you are the bald one let me see" I said removing my hand and jumping to touch his hair, who knew Abdul Rahman was this tall.

"I'm not bald , you can see that clearly he said bending his head for me to see"

"Wait , there's no hair here, maybe you are actually bald" I teased.

"I'm not, you are joking, let me see" he said stepping in front of the mirror.
"You can't see where it is, it's at the extreme end" I added.
"Where now?" He asked touching his head his face looking serious.

I laughed loudly looking at him, I can't believe you fell for it.
"Were you teasing me?" He asked walking towards me.
"No I'm not" I replied running towards the door. He rushed after me immediately, opening my bedroom door Faizah stood in front of it a frown on her face.

"Aishat!" She said.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming back today?" Abdul-Rahman asked.
"Well I changed my mind, I can't afford to leave you alone in the house" she replied walking past me to meet Abdul-Rahman.
"Leaving me alone,well Aishat is here, and I'm not complaining"
"Aishat?, She doesn't count...." Faizah replied holding Abdul-Rahman's hand.

Chapter 27.

"She said that?" Farid asked.

"Yes"I replied placing the phone closer to my ears.

"She's very stupid, and what was Bro Abdul-Rahman reactions to it?"
"He dragged her out of the room and gave me an apologetic look ,I didn't step out of my room since then , so I don't know" I replied.

"I'm going to call him, he's going back on his word and it's not even a week yet he should...
"Farid please, don't call him I will talk to him about it I don't want it to look as if I'm reporting him to you" I replied.

"Okay, but that lady should better warn herself, she should get used to the fact that her husband has a new wife" Farid said angrily.
"Calm down now, I'm not even as annoyed as you, the lady is your cousin, you know right ?, you want to chose me over your family?"

"Which family, the only family I have are dead and the people that are close to the word family is your own family, so anyone after that doesn't count just like she stated earlier, she and her family doesn't count" Farid replied. I laughed loudly, if they had told me the young boy who drove me home that day was like this I would have argued, even when we met on the beach he didn't talk much, I guess it's because we are closer now.

"It's okay, you are funny sometimes, How was your test, you scaled it right?, SCHOLAR!!" I teased trying to change the conversation.
"Please oo, don't use that word on me, Alhamdulillah , the test was okay it was just the time they gave us it was too short, and those questions I don't even know where that

man got it from, I had headache immediately at the sight of that evil question." Farid complained.

I laughed loudly "so questions are now evil?, tell me more"

"It's evil, that's what I know, everyone complained about the test, it's too hard" Farid replied my door knob twisted slowly as Abdul Rahman walked in.

"You finished it right?, don't worry it will be good, we will talk later" I said looking at Abdul-Rahman who was now comfortably seated at the edge of my bed.

"Oh okay Ma Salam!, don't forget to send that video" Farid replied.
"I have sent it already, it's funny, call me tomorrow, or I will call you... anyhow" I said hanging up the call, lucky enough for me to see the frown on Abdul-Rahman's face.

"So??" I asked turning to face him.
"Who's that?" He asked staring at my phone.
"It's Farid who else, I was bored so I called him" I replied.
"Oh okay I thought they were doing test, is he not suppose to be reading?"
"Well,that doesn't mean he shouldn't have time to talk to me, told him what Faizah said earlier and he was worried if I was okay"

"You told Farid what happened?, Subhanallah what was his reply?" Abdul-Rahman asked.
"Don't tell me you actually take Farid threat seriously?, He said he would call you but I told him I will talk with you myself" I laughed loudly looking at Abdul-Rahman.

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Abdul-Rahman

Faizah I said called trying to hold back my anger.

"What's it?, why did you drag me like that?" She snapped.
"Oh you are asking me what's it, what was the meaning of what you said in front of Aishat, be careful,watch what you say ..."

"Please why should I watch what I say in my husband's house, she's the one who should watch what she does, did I ask her to come here, to come and destroy our marriage" Salma replied cutting me off.
"Oh now,you want to talk about destroyed marriage, who was hiding the fact that they don't have a womb?, is it me?, Faizah answer me am I the one, who suggested the physician we should visit and gave them money to lie to us that there's nothing wrong with both of us,am I the one ??, who also begged the last doctor we visited not to disclose your situation to me?"

"I knew you had a past, and you were ready to change that was why I decided to accept you, but you hiding the fact that you don't have a womb that's too much, if you don't want any trouble, you know I have not told Mom yet about it, leave Aishat alone let her enjoy her marriage, the poor girl has been through a lot." I said not waiting for Faizah to reply or break down in tears I opened the door stepping out.

"What if she doesn't have a womb too, what's the different between both of us,she had an abortion too" Faizah shouted before I could close the door.

I looked at her, ignoring her I walk away.
I headed straight for Aishat's room praying she didn't hear the conversation between Faizah and I, firstly I didn't want her to feel bad, and secondly I don't want anybody to know Faizah can't give birth.

I heard laughter coming from her room, jealousy engulfing me, she had never laughed like that even when I was teasing her this morning, I didn't bother to knock again, I opened her door and there she was laying on the bed laughing again.

"I have sent it already, it's funny, call me tomorrow or I will call you, anyhow " she said to the person she was talking too.
"Who's that?" I asked immediately as she hung up.

She had replied telling me it was Farid, I know nothing was going on between them, but what if she start having feelings for Farid he was showing her concern and giving her attention, I won't be surprised if they talk everyday.

"I thought you said he was having test and is he not suppose to be reading?" I replied the jealousy vivid in my tone.

"Well,that doesn't mean he shouldn't have time to talk to me, told him what Faizah said earlier and he was worried if I was okay" she replied.

He must clearly be thinking I'm not fit to be an husband I thought.

"You told Farid what happened?, Subhanallah what was his reply?" I asked eager to know what he said

"Don't tell me you actually take Farid threat seriously?, He said he would call you but I told him I will talk with you myself" Aishat laughed again, I was about to say something else when my phone rang.

Ibrahim name popped on the screen , I picked it up anxious to know the reason why he called.

"Salam alaykum bro" he said.

"Wa alaykum Salam" I replied putting the phone on speaker since Aishat wanted to know why her brother called.

"Have you heard the news?" He asked.
"What news,I haven't been online since morning and I don't have time to watch news" I replied.
"Okay, is Aishat there?" He said.
"Yes she is, what's the problem?" I replied running out of patient.
"Okay,she shouldn't hear this but she would later see it online, Kamal and his wife was involved in an accident, they collided with another car, there were five victims, one of them died on spot, but I heard the accident was fatal." Ibrahim explained.
"Subhanallah" Aisha shouted, "Subhanallah" she shouted again.

"Stop it Nana, the rest has been rushed to the hospital, I pray they wake up soon" Ibrahim replied.

"Is Kamal and his wife okay?" I asked, not because I cared but I was just feeling pity for his wife, Astagfirullah it serves him right, but he shouldn't die so soon, God should continue to punish him until he atones for his sin.
"I don't know, I only saw the news, they are probably okay, or not" Ibrahim replied.
Aishat put her hands on her mouth sobbing quietly, I looked at her, why is she crying?? don't blame me but if I was the one who heard this, I will surely be happy and I know anyone in my shoes will agree with me too.

Chapter 28.

Abdul-Rahman

"Salam alaykum" Aishat greeted emerging from the kitchen, I had just finished praying my solah and was headed to the kitchen to make something I can eat before going to work.

Faizah love sleeping a lot, even though I wake her up to pray subhi she would still sleep back grumbling about me disturbing her sleep.

"Wa alaykum Salam" I knocked on your door earlier but I didn't ear any reply. I said surprised to see her coming from the kitchen.

"It must be when I came to the kitchen, I didn't ear anybody knock while I was praying." She replied.

"Oh okay I was even thinking maybe you were fast asleep"
"No, I wasn't sleeping" she replied chuckling.
"I'm heading to the kitchen, didn't know you were there, I want to make something before going to work" I explained.

Aishat laughed loudly looking at me as if I just grew horns or something.
"What's funny?" I asked.
"By make something...you mean you want to cook?, that's actually funny, you have not one but two wives and you want to cook yourself.

"Yes I'm used to cooking by myself if I'm going to early to work" I replied, immediately regretting I said that, I didn't want Aisha to think that Faizah wasn't a good wife or something but now that I think about it she had never woke up in the morning to prepare something for me.

"Oh, I was actually cooking you know I was working back at Oyo so I'm used to cooking in the morning, you can let me know if you are ready to eat" Aishat replied.

"Like there's food that I can eat" I asked again checking if I heard her well.
"Yes there's food, you can tell me when you are ready to eat so I can just dish it out" Aishat replied she was not smiling or anything so I knew she was saying the truth.

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After Abdul-Rahman left for work with a satisfied smile on his face, I couldn't count the number of time he said thanks for the food I prepared.
I had tidied the house afterwards, when I was done I made myself comfortable in the living room to watch TV.

I was engrossed with watching the TV and didn't even know when Faizah entered the living room, it's 10:00, I don't want to believe she just woke up.
"Salam alaykum" I greeted.

She glanced at me, ignoring me she picked up the TV remote and changed to another channel.

"Sister Faizah, what was that for?"I asked trying really hard to contain my anger.
"Are you dumb or you are just pretending to be dumb, I changed the channel , meaning I have something better to watch." She replied her tone different from mine, meaning she was ready to put up a fight.

"Oh, I see" I replied standing up, there was no use arguing with someone like her she's not worth it.

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I sat in my office pondering on my recent discovery,Faizah not being able to conceive. why did she have to withdraw that huge information from me.

I can count the number of Doctor we visited after our marriage, anytime mom complained about her not getting pregnant, she will cry again and suggest we visit one doctor whom her friends recommended not knowing she already paid them.

The last doctor we visited was recommended by my Mom and she insisted saying if that Doctor says nothing is wrong with both of us then she would agree the other doctors are not lying. I had told Faizah about it immediately lying that Ibrahim recommended the Doctor, cause I know if I mentioned it to her, she won't agree, knowing my mother and her were not the best of friends.

The doctor had called me the day before the results were to come out telling me Faizah came to beg and bribe not to tell me she had no womb. The information had hit me like a rock,I couldn't even ask him for a copy of the results.

I pray he doesn't reveal that information to my mom, she was occupied with planning my wedding so she must have forgotten our visit to the doctor, once she remember, she's going to force the information out of me or ask the doctor, world war IV will surely happen.

A knock came from my door bringing me back from my thoughts, my secretary walked in an envelope in hand.

"What's that?" I asked.

"It's from Goodwill's Hospital, Dr Garba sent it" she replied dropping it on my table.
"Oh ok, you can leave" I said dismissing her.
It was the results of the test we did, I glanced through mine and picked up Faizah's own, something at the bottom of the paper caught my attention.

Womb has been removed- Womb damaged- abortion done more than three times

I read and reread again hoping the number will change, Faizah had lot of explanation to do.

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"I will call you later." Farid informed Aishat, turning to address the Keke driver

“Drop me here sir”

"Are you not going back to your hostel?"
Aishat asked from the other end of the call.
"I just remembered I have no bathing soap again, I am going to get it from that new supermarket I told you about" he explained, as the security opened the door for him, he nodded his head as courtesy, the breeze coming from the AC engulfed him.

"Oh, that place, is it nice, you even said it's close to your hostel" she asked.
"I just entered, but it's looking nice I'm only here to get bathing soap, and leave... nothing much" Farid smiled his dimple gracing his cheek.

"Okay I will call you later, Abdul-Rahman will soon be back I want to go and cook." Aisha said.

After the call with Aisha, Farid took a pack of his usual bathing soap and headed to the cashier.
"Good afternoon ma" he greeted pushing the soap to the counter.
"Good afternoon" the woman replied still engaged on whatever she was doing on her system.
That voice sounds familiar, Farid thought as he slightly bend down to check the face of the cashier who had a face cap on.

"Okay, your money is 7000, are you paying in cash or ... She said looking up , stopping mid sentence as she recognized the person standing in front of her.

Farid also went stiff looking at her.

They stared at each other neither of the two trying to say anything.
Farid removed his wallet dropping new 1000 naira notes on the counter, "that's 7000" for the soap.

"Farid" the cashier called.
"Yes" he replied picking up his purchase.
"I'm really sorry, I didn't mean to pack all your money and run away, but I didn't have any means, and Gbenga was stressing me to handover his son I had to run,I didn't want the poor boy to grew up with him, he would end up like his father" she ranted, while Farid stared.

Aunty Morake, I will be happy if you don't explain anything.

"Have a nice day" He added walking away.

Chapter 29.

I love minding my business, but any normal person would notice the tension between Abdul-Rahman and Faizah, we are currently seated at the dining table eating our food in silence.

After what happened in the morning between I and Faizah , I stayed back in my room,I didn't do much, I only called Rofiat, Farid, Mum, Dad and even Mrs Ahmad, Rofiat had a lot to ask and say ,so we spent more than an hour talking, the last person I called was Farid, who was returning from class at that time,so we didn't talk much.

After the call I made way for the kitchen cooking the food we were all suppose to eat, Faizah was no where to be found, maybe she was in her room,few minutes after I was done, the door alarm sounded and Abdul Rahman stepped in a frown on his face.

"Salam alaykum" he had greeted trying to force a smile, I had returned the greetings, thinking maybe he had a bad day, the next person he asked was Faizah and he stormed off to their room.

After setting up the food on the table he and Faizah descended the stairs, Farid still frowning and Faizah looking as if she was scolded.

"Thank you Aishat" Abdul-Rahman said taking a seat.
Faizah had stood in front of the dining chairs staring at the food I prepared.
"Excuse me, will you sit down and eat" Abdul-Rahman growled.

She sat down after a while still staring at the food.
I watched silently as Abdul-Rahman bent down to Faizah level whispering something to her ears, her face took another colour immediately and as if commanded or threatened she dished out her food on the plate eating fast.

We ate our food in silence the sound of plates and spoons doing the conversation
"How was your day?" Abdul-Rahman asked turning to face me.
"Huh?" I asked.
Your day? He repeated again now smiling genuinely.
"It went well, I spent most of it in my bedroom" I replied smiling back.
"Oh, it wasn't boring right, I'm trying to allow you to settle down before we discuss whether you still wish to go back to work or not." He said lifting his cup to his lips.

"Yeah it wasn't boring I contacted Rofiat,Dad, mum and Ummi , they were happy I called."
"Okay, that sounds nice."

And that's how we continued, chatting about how our day went and forgetting the third person at the table.

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After eating, Faizah had offered to help pack the plates and we washed the dishes in silence, Abdul-Rahman seems to pretend she wasn't there and kept engaging me, she didn't utter a thing too, I wondered what could have sealed her lips.

I was standing at the edge of my bed, trying to tuck in the bedsheets, the door opened slowly and Abdul-Rahman walked in.
"Hey" I said turning to face him.
"Hello, can I sleep here tonight?" He asked.

"Yeah,you don't have to ask" I replied laughing softly.
"Okay"

I turned slowly from him climbing the bed, My phone screen awake immediately with a message notification.
He plopped down beside me too, staring at my phone.
"What?" I asked looking at him.
"What do you mean by what?" He replied.
"You are staring at my phone"
"Why can't I?, are you hiding something?" He said.
"No, you can stare all you want , don't complain if you find it boring" I replied opening my WhatsApp to check the message it was Farid, Abdul-Rahman moved closer trying to read it too, I didn't know he was capable of being jealous.
"Salam alaykum ma, I should have called,but I didn't want Bro Abdul-Rahman to break my neck for calling a married woman at night, the supermarket I went to today I saw Aunty Morake,she was working as a cashier there...

Abdul-Rahman paused looking at me "who's Aunty Morake"

"His father's younger sister, she stole his money and ran away with it" I replied staring at the phone to read the rest of the message.

"What kind of messed up family is this boy sorrounded with?" Abdul-Rahman asked.

"Farid is over that already, they should just stay away from him, they left when he needed them"

Hmm!, He mumbled

"You and Farid?, how did you guys meet, I asked Ibrahim but he didn't know the full details either r" Abdul-Rahman asked while I was typing a reply to Farid.

"Met him on my way back home when I was returning from school, he was riding okada, he carried me home, he looked to young to be riding it, that was not even what made me have an interest in his personal life, I was marveled by his fluent English and the way he was neatly dressed.'" I replied.

"You did well, I have discussed with Farid a few times and I can see he's really intelligent he's going places, but what I can still not explain is why my father-in-law allowed his sister's son to suffer when they have all the money in the world to take care of him"

"Well, Farid said they were not happy with the marriage, and they still blame his dad for her death, but that's not an excuse to abandon your sister's son for almost thirteen years, unless Farid is ready to forgive them I mustn't see them near him, I can't imagine him breaking down again." I said shifting my focus back to my phone

"It's okay Nana, Farid is strong just like you said, everything is going to be fine, he has us, and we have his back too" Abdul-Rahman replied embracing me.

"*We all deserve to be happy, don't we*?"

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It's Saturday morning, I have a hell of time convincing Aishat not to wake up early and cook, she's been doing that all week, I had to force her to go back and sleep after praying.

Faizah walked into the living room, staring at me ,I was sitting comfortably on the sofa in the sitting room watching football.

"Salam alaykum" she greeted.
"Wa alaykum Salam, have you prayed?" I asked.

"Yes" she replied.
"Okay good" I said turning my attention back to the TV, if she's ready to tell the truth,then maybe I can consider forgiving her.

Aishat hummed as she descended from the stairs, she paused immediately looking at both I and Salma.

"I told you to sleep" I said looking at her.
"You said sleep, and I have slept already, I can't stay in my room being idle" she replied walking to the living room as she stood in front of me.

"You are stubborn" I replied smiling.
"Well that's not new, you know Ummi once said I was stubborn like you" Aishat replied smiling back.
"That's a lie, I'm not stubborn you are the stubborn one here." I said.
"I'm not... The door alarm sounded interrupting Aisha.
"Are you expecting someone" Aisha asked.
"No" I replied standing up to open the door, Aisha and Faizah followed me closely.

Opening the hole on the door, mum's face stared back at me.
"Mum, oh my God, if she's here unannounced that means
.."

Salam alaykum, Abdul Rahman,open this door she said interrupting my thoughts.
"W alaykum Salam ma" I replied opening the door and standing aside for her to walk in, Faizah stood at one side her expression showing she was tensed.

"Ummi!" Aisha called.
"Come here darling,look at you ,you are glowing, I guess this man here is treating you well or else..." Mom said hugging Aisha.

"This man?, Can you believe this, I'm your son oo" I replied looking at her.
"Pele, just make my baby cry and you will see my other side" she said touching Aisha cheeks who in turn kept smiling.

"Salam alaykum ma" Faizah greeted her voice trembling.
"Faizah!!, How are you, well done oo, we saw all your doings" mum replied hugging her slightly.

"I'm fine ma" she replied freezing under her touch"

"I came here unannounced, so you people should stop looking at me as if I did something bad, I'm only here because it's important, I'm also a busy woman" she replied walking over to seat on the couch.

Chapter 30

Mrs Ahmad had made herself comfortable on the couch, her focus on TV Abdul-Rahman walked away from the door too, making his way to the couch opposite the one his mom was sitting on.

Aisha looked at Faizah who was transfixed to one spot, "let's go and cook" she beckoned to her,turning to the direction of the kitchen.

Abdul-Rahman stole glances at his mom, who had a blank expression on her face, if she was here to discuss something serious,she didn't show it, "I thought you guys are suppose to be cooking" she asked looking at Faizah.

Ye ...s yes ma! Faizah stammered scurrying off to the kitchen.

"Watch the TV and stop staring at my face" she said to Abdul-Rahman who quickly avert his eyes.

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After realizing Faizah was not ready to join me in the kitchen, I had proceeded with cooking Mrs Ahmad's favourite dish, which was porridge, she enjoyed it a lot, I remembered when she would call my mom to cook it for her when she's coming to visit.

-"Maryam, help me add crayfish and smoke fish oo" she would instruct my mom on the phone.

We had yams and potatoes at home, All thanks to Abdul-Rahman who had bought them the day before today, he said we had only been repeating the same food "Rice-Beans-spaghetti-Rice-Bread." and truly that's what we ate the whole week.

I started humming one of my favorite Nasheed, while peeling the yam and potato, I love the combination of the two for porridge it's really nice.

The door of the kitchen opened slowly, Faizah walked in looking at me, I noticed her tensed behavior when she saw Ummi, even Abdul-Rahman was trying to hide his emotion too, were they hiding something from her?.

"What are you doing" she asked rudely, all the frightened emotion she has in the living room was gone.

"I ignored her rude behavior and replied "I'm peeling both for porridge."

"Why?, who said you could cook porridge?" She asked walking closer towards me.

"Abdul-Rahman said we ate the same food through out the week,he said we can cook yam/ potato this weekend, since Mrs Ahmad is here and she likes porridge I thought we should...
"We should do what?, did I ask her to come here unannounced, please I don't like porridge, and Abdul-Rahman doesn't like it too,you both can eat porridge" she said snatching the knife away from my hand, carrying the bowl I was slicing it into she tossed it on the kitchen counter and proceeded to pick up one Yam to peel.
That's it she passed her boundary A voice in my head echoed.
"You met me here, give me back my knife, I'm not done, Abdul-Rahman eats porridge, he use to eat it at my parent's house, I think you are the only one who has problem with it"

"This is my husband's house and I will decide what everyone will eat" she replied ignoring me.

"It's my husband's house too, I don't like problem, return my bowl back to the sink, and give me that knife"

She ignored me again peeling the yam, and pretending I wasn't there.

"Faizah" I called she turned swiftly, dropping the knife in the sink and pointing her finger at me.

"What's your problem, don't you get it, you are not suppose to be here, Abdul-Rahman married you out of pity, you are just here because I haven't given birth yet, also don't think you are better or something."

"You don't know anything, don't say what you don't know" I replied.

"Really?, But I know one thing, and it's that no one wants you, to think of it, was I the one whose Boyfriend impregnated her and even aborted the pregnancy without her

knowledge, he left you to marry someone else he fooled you, the way you are allowing yourself to get fooled, once I get pregnant for Abdul-Rahman he will forget you."

"You are very stupid" Mrs Ahmad said , before I could utter anything.
"Mom, it's....
"Who's your mom?, Don't even say anything,you empty barrel" Mrs Ahmad snapped.

I shake my head trying to fight back the tears, maybe Faizah was right, I'm only here because she can't give birth.
"Nana" Ummi called trying to touch me, ignoring her I ran out of the kitchen and stumbled upon Abdul-Rahman.

"What's wrong Aishat?" He asked looking worried.

It's all lies,he doesn't actually care

"Don't touch me" I said turning towards the stairs.

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Good afternoon, the nurse greeted checking on the patient.

Good afternoon, Nurse, Mrs Adelana replied staring at her son, who was looking lifeless on the bed, after the accident that happened two weeks ago, he had been in coma.

She waited for the nurse to finish her checkup , throwing the same question she has been asking since her son had been in coma.

"When is he going to wake up?"

"Soon ma, just keep praying" the nurse replied looking at her with pity, one last look at the patient, she left.
Kamal please wake up , she said holding her son's hand.

She looked at him, allowing the tears to flow freely,if she hadn't forced Kamal to marry her friend's daughter, this would have been prevented, her husband had died leaving her with two boys and one girl, Kamal was the first born, it was hard to take care of them, adding the financial aspect to it, everything she had done was not enough.

She believed, Safeerah's parent would be her one-way ticket to wealth and had forced her son to marry into their family.
She was happy when her friend had asked Kamal to take over her company, she was very happy, and had told her son to make sure she marry Safeeerah.

Kamal had refused at first saying he had someone already, but because of her greed for wealth, she manipulated the poor boy to succumb to her wishes, now she had nothing in return but a son who's stuck between living and dying.

"I'm sorry, please wake up" she said again sobbing loudly, Safeeerah was discharged one week ago, the first thing her parent did was to send a divorce letter, and accused her son of wanting to kill her.

Safeeerah even said she was not happy in the marriage at all,that Kamal had always threaten her and forced her to do house chores, they had left that day, and since then she didn't hear from them, until two days ago,when they sent a sack Letter, they are not even human at all, the poor boy was in a coma, it was not even certain if he would lived or not ,but they didn't care.

Aishat!!, her son said, trying to move his hand.
"Kamal, she shouted
"Can you see me?" She asked looking at her son, whose eyes was wet with tears.

Ignoring his mom, he kept repeating "please let me see Aishat, I have offended her, I need to beg her, I am a monster, I have to ask her for forgiveness" he rambled on a tear dropping from his eye.

"Kamal" Mrs Adelana called again.

"I'm a sinner mom, I made someone cry ,I am a murderer I killed a baby, Astagfirullah, I need to ask God for forgiveness...

Chapter 31

Faizah stood at the middle of the sitting room staring at Mrs Ahmad.
"You know you shouldn't be the one to talk, someone with no womb" she shouted at her.

Faizah moved back her lips trembling she stared at Abdul-Rahman with a -did you tell her expression.

Abdul-Rahman shaked his head looking at Faizah, he didn't even know his mum was coming talkless of now telling her about it, the Doctor was recommended by his mom ,so it's normal she had gone behind their back to ask for the results.

"And you... She paused pointing at her only son as if she was going to pounce on him.

"Abdul-Rahman, if you know you can't handle two wives why bother and marry two, I know this is not the first attempt she has taken to make Aishat cry"

"I am sorry, Aishat didn't tell me she had any problem with Faizah, and Faizah promised to behave, didn't you say so?" He turned to Faizah who was now looking at the ground.

"Why bother and ask her, you are supposed to know everything happening in your house, that aside... Why is it that the Doctor's result was different from all the other one you have been doing?" Mrs Ahmad inquired again.

"Faizah paid them to lie to us about the result" Abdul Rahman replied.

"Subhanallah!!!," Mrs Ahmad shouted looking at her daughter-in-law.

"Ahh, I can see you are very wicked, you don't want my son to give birth at all right, you will keep deceiving him with the fact that you are okay, and blackmailing him emotionally not to marry another wife"

"It's not your fault, it's this one's fault" she added pointing at her son, I didn't raise you like this, Did Faizah looked like someone that feel remorseful for all her actions, to even keep her in your house is a bad decision, what if she attack Aisha out of jealousy?" Mrs Ahmad stated holding her son's hand.

Abdul-Rahman

Mom was right, keeping Aishat with Faizah was a very bad decision, what would I have done, if I had returned from work and something had happened to her.

"Mom... , I realized few days to the wedding that Faizah couldn't give birth, we didn't have a proper discussion about it because of the wedding, I got the results three days ago, it was sent to my office, that was when I realize it was multiple abortions that caused her predicament, she didn't tell me she had an abortion, I believe I shouldn't be to rash with my decision that's the reason I gave her time to explain herself, about Aishat she doesn't like sharing things with me, or her brother, she prefer talking to Farid, do you think I don't use to ask her how she's doing, and she seems happy,we still joked this morning, I don't even know" I replied holding my forehead.

"Now you can talk, she doesn't like sharing things with you,how have you treated her in the past??,what was your attitude to her when I and her mother were talking about you two getting married, you think she will suddenly start sharing things with you just because you are now her husband, I would say you caused all of this, if you hadn't allowed your stubbornness to take over you, this one won't be in the picture" mom replied pointing at Faizah, who was now sobbing quietly.

I looked at the direction of the stairs, mom was right, I have always acted very bad to Aishat, She must be in her room either crying or talking to Farid, either of the two I need to wrap this conversation up and beg her.

"I have discussed with Maryam, and we think you and Aishat should go for your honeymoon, you need a space from all this, but now that you and your wife has successfully made my baby cry, I don't think that's possible" mom replied looking at us, I won't be surprised if they already pick the place we were going,mum and Ummi were not the kind to waste time.

"It's possible, I will go and talk to Aishat, before tomorrow we will give you a reply"

"Hmm okay, just make sure you settle all of this, I won't ask you to divorce Faizah, it's your marriage not mine so you should make the decision yourself, but I would advise her to leave this house for now." My mom stated.

"Okay Mom, thank you" I replied.

"Now I'm extremely hungry, you can go and meet Aishat , Faizah should follow me to the kitchen, before we finish cooking, you should be done with her then we eat and discuss the next step" mum said leaving for the kitchen, Faizah slowly following her behind, Alhamdulillah, I didn't know what came over mum, but I'm happy she handled this matter without breaking anyone's head.

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"Nana" Abdul-Rahman called, a knock followed immediately.
"It's opened you can enter" I replied cleaning my wet face.

"I..., I don't even know where to start from" he said taking his seat on my bed.

"But I swear by Allah's name I didn't marry you out of pity or to spite Faizah" he added again.

"You didn't??, it's hard to believe cause I'm not your favourite person after all"

He held my hand "I know it's hard to believe but that's a lie I have always cared about you,I have never hated you, I was just trying to avoid any confusion of maybe I had feelings for you, I know you don't want to marry me then" he explained.
"I know I'm a buffoon... " He added
I laughed loudly looking at him, I had called him that the day he came to my school.
He continued...
.... I'm arrogant, I'm unattractive..

“No, that unattractive is a lie, I was just too pissed to accept it then”, I replied looking at him.

He smiled and continued, his dimple taking a place on his cheek,... But I promise I would never take advantage of you,we can make this work, both of us, we can start over again.

"Yeah we can" I replied smiling.

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"Were you able to get her number?" Kamal asked trying to stand up from the bed.

"No, your brother said the number was saying switch off, we tried calling her husband's own, but it seems like he blocked you" Mrs Adelana replied.

"Did you call them with another number apart from mine?" He asked again.
"Yes but he didn't pick up and her own number still said switched off, maybe she's not using the sim again.

"Oh my God!" Kamal complained, "when am I going to be discharged, I will look for them soon" he said trying to stand up.

"Take it easy, the doctor said by next week, why are you looking for them so badly, you should get well, before stressing yourself...

Chapter 32

Abdul Farid took slow steps as he walked away from the University gate, one look at him you would know he was not in a hurry to get home, his first year in school had been great but during one of his conversations with Sister Aishat he had unknowingly told her the condition of the school hostel, they have problem with light and water, and to even back it up ,the kind of mosquitoes that disturb them at night, Jide one of Farid's roommate once joked that the mosquitoes were made from another planet entirely,they look too big to be real and the way they hummed into one's ear it's like they had a speaker connected to their body.Aishat hearing all of this had immediately discussed with her dad, and Farid had to leave the school hostel for an apartment outside school he was happy about the change, who doesn't want a big room all to themselves with constant light and water, infact the apartment was in an estate, but it looked as if he was asking for too much, maybe he didn't deserve all of this, but Aishat had told him to stop thinking like that , assuring him that if his parent were alive they would have done even more than that,and that he deserved all things good.

His phone dinged in his pocket and he quickly shove it out staring at the screen, Sister Aishat had sent a message again, they are currently on their honeymoon,he had administer a no call rule, but Sister Aishat was stubborn and she had forced him to promise he will message her everyday if there would be no calls for now, he had agreed selfishly, first of all she's the only one he opens up to , and secondly he enjoys the little conversation they had, since Aishat was good in keeping conversation, last night he had told her to go and sleep before Abdul-Rahman shoved off his head, their relationship was getting better day by day.

"We went to the beach today, look at the view is it not nice?" She had texted attaching a picture to it.

Abdul Farid laughed looking at the picture where Sister Aishat was smiling,she was backing the ocean and the sun was setting, it's a good view actually.

"It's nice but it would have been better if you weren't blocking the sunset I can't have a good view of it" he texted back adding a laughing emoji, he loved spiting her sometimes.

Dropping his phone back in his pocket,he stared at the young children who were hawking on the streets of Lagos, this had brought back the memory of him too in Oyo, he couldn't remember the number of works he had done, he took one look at them praying they find their own helper soon.

"Uncle, come and buy groundnut, it's nice oo" one of the children called to him smiling.
"I have them at home,but let me give you something" he replied pushing his hand into his back pack the young boy staring at him in wonder, removing a new one thousand naira note he dropped it into the boy's palm and smiled it him.
"Use it to buy something, I know you must be very tired" he said to him in Yoruba.

"Thank you sir" the boy shouted looking as if he had just won a trophy,the rest of the young boys hawking stood up coming to stand beside the boy he gave money to.

Farid looked at them, opening his backpack again, he counted 5 boys and brought out 5 one thousand new notes and hand it over to them, he frowned immediately noticing the last boy ,who was dressed in an Ankara shirt and a brown faded shorts.

"Ade, is that you" he called looking at his cousin who was 6 years old the last time he had seen him, he was looking a little bit taller now but one look at him he was unkempt too like his fellow hawkers.

The young boy stared back at Farid realization clouding his face "Brother mhi Farid" he muttered jumping to hug Farid, who patted his head in return.

"Why are you hawking where's Aunty Morake?" he asked, looking at him.

"Mummy is fine,she will come and pick me soon, maybe she is busy at work" the boy replied still clutching to the note in his hand.

Abdul- Farid nodded, knowing he meant the supermarket where he had met Aunty Morake last week, though she didn't treat him well, Ade was a young boy who could have done nothing about the situation, and even, there were some particular days when he had given him out of his food, and sometimes he would ask for more money so he could give Farid out of it.

"You look bigger and taller, I don't know it was you until I looked at you again" Ade said.

"See who's talking, you look more taller too,I guess you have muscles now he said smiling at him.

"Yeah I do, do you know how I work now, I can carry anything" the young boy reply pulling his hands up to display how strong he was.

Farid laughed loudly looking at his cousin that's some muscle you have got there, it's really mu.... He stopped laughing immediately looking at Aunty Morake who was holding a tray, it has three to four plantain chips pack on them, the tray must be Ade's own.

"Mum, look at Brother mhi, I thought you said you don't know where he is, but guess what he found us" Ade said pointing at Farid.

"Farid" Aunty Morake called looking as if she would break down into tears.

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Faizah shifted uneasily listening to the conversation her mother-in-law was having with one of her regular customers, after the what transpired that day, Abdul Rahman and Aishat had travelled as promised, going to back to her parent's house will raise a lot of questions,so instead she had gone back to Oyo with Mrs Ahmad, surprisingly she had been treating her well, and they have become closer than they have been in the past.

"The woman dragged her outside and called the neighbors on her, calling her **ashewo**" the customer said making gestures with her hand.

The conversation was about a couple whose mother-in-Law just discovered the wife had a daughter outside without the knowledge of both the husband or his mother.
The mother-in-law had dragged the woman outside and convinced her son to throw her out, Faizah shivered in fear, if Mrs Ahmad was not a good woman she would have thrown her out of her son's house and even out of his life, but they had given her a second chance, which was rare.

She looked at Mrs Ahmad who listened to the woman attentively nodding her head and adding a reply where necessary, but it's glaring that she didn't agree with what the mother-in-law had done, "they should have sat down and discuss about it and she's a woman too oo, and the wife also she's not suppose to hide that kind of truth from her husband, maybe if she had come clean with him the husband may have accepted her like that, and moreover anyone who claims they love you should accept you with all your flaws, so far you have left it behind and you are willing to adjust and change" Mrs Ahmad had replied.

Faizah nodded looking at the two,it was as if the words were meant for her, if she had told Abdul-Rahman everything, maybe he would have understood. She stood up from where she was sitting going to the inner part of the store,this was all Saheed's fault and she cursed the day they cross path, abortion after abortion he had done for him, with the fool promising her they would marry once they leave school and have a well-paid job

telling her he was not ready to be a father yet, well the bigger fool was her,who had allowed it. This was the thing about her gender they are easy to manipulate.

"Faizah !, Mrs Ahmad called walking in, her customer must have left.
"Yes ma" she replied cleaning tears from her face.
"Is everything okay" Mrs Ahmad asked staring suspiciously at her.
"Yes, I got some sand stuck in my eyes" she replied.
"Oh sorry dear, have you used water to wash it out?" She asked looking at her with concern.
"Yes , it's better now" she replied nodding her head.

"Okay, it's time for Maghrib, let's pray....

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Abdul Rahman stood at the porch of the house they stayed in at the beach,they had decided to stay here till tomorrow before going back to their suite.

He had come outside to discuss with his best friend,his brother and his wife's brother, Ibrahim was happy Aishat was smiling again,the fact that she updated her WhatsApp status was a big one. "Thank you Abdul-Rahman for making her smile again" Ibrahim had said and he noticed the genuine appreciation in his voice.

His phone rang loudly and this time around it was another unknown number calling him, he was about to hang up, but looking at it he had been receiving several calls from unknown numbers this past few weeks, after a quick thinking he decided to pick up the call.

"Salam alaykum" A male voice greeted, sounding anxious.

"Wa alaykum Salam" Abdul Rahman replied, trying to guess where he had heard the voice before.

"It's Kamal and I beg you in the name of Allah, please don't hang up" the caller said sounding scared.

"What's it Kamal,so you didn't die after all" Abdul-Rahman replied.

"Yeah I didn't, but please I need to speak to Aisha, please I'm begging you, I know I have offended her a lot but I need to ask for her forgiveness, I know she's your wife now so you can talk to her for me, I would like to see her physically, please you can be there too, but I need to apologise" he said letting out his sentence in one breathe scared of the fact that Abdul-Rahman is likely to hang up.

"And what made you think she want to see you?" Abdul-Rahman asked after a long silence.

"I know she hates me and I'm the last person she wants to see but please I want to apologise please" Kamal begged.

"Aisha is not going to see you,my wife won't come anywhere near you,and you won't come anywhere near her, if you know what's best for you stay away from us, don't call me again, we don't want her to remember all those sad events, so I think you should forget about her and she won't remember you too" Abdul-Rahman replied hanging up.

Chapter 33

Saheed ehm! ... We met in 100 level Faizah said forcing the words out .
"Go on" Abdul-Rahman said a plain expression on his face, after a week with Aishat they both returned to Oshogbo , and early this morning they had come to Oyo, the plan was to come and greet their parent, Aishat had stayed back at their house, since Rofiat had showed up too, so Abdul-Rahman had left her there to discuss and catch up with her friend, he himself had drove straight to his parent's house just in time to meet his mom and Faizah preparing to go to her store, her mom in understanding had left them alone making an excuse of Faizah staying back to keep Abdul-Rahman's company, Faizah in return tried everything possible to evade the role and follow her , but Mrs Ahmad was stubborn, she had rushed out of the house after lying that she forgot the car key in her room,which Faizah went back to look for.

"Ummi ,I can't find the key" she had announced while descending the stairs, the only person she met there was Abdul-Rahman laughing at his mom trick.

"She left!!?" Faizah exclaimed looking shock and anxious.

"Yes she did" Abdul-Rahman replied still laughing while making himself comfortable on the chair.

"Come and sit, since you would be keeping my company" Abdul Rahman said, rephrasing his mom's word.

"Yeah..." Faizah replied walking reluctantly to sit beside him.

That was when he brought back issue of their test results, and Faizah had no choice but to tell the story she had kept to herself.

He was the first male to talk to me in my department, it was my first day in school, I was looking for my department and couldn't find it I was thirty minutes late for the class,so I had no choice but to ask the man who was sitting on one of the podiums in front of the lecture room, his eyes glued to the phone he was pressing, he in return had offered to take me to my class, which was good, I had thanked him that day, grateful for it.

The first class ended after one hour, even though I stood through out the whole class, the lecturer said I shouldn't sit because of my lateness, and I was happy when he finally left my legs feeling wobbled from standing for so long.

Good evening wonderful people, a deep voice greeted making me to raise my head, my concentration shifting from the note I was copying, standing in front of the class was 7 students, I know they were student because standing with them was the guy that took me to class earlier,he even waved at me and smiled, it was then I discovered they were the student Executive in my Faculty and the guy's name was Saheed he was the welfare Director.

“You are lost again” someone voiced out from behind me, I turned slowly and it was that Saheed guy I laughed loudly looking at him, that was the second time we talked, I have only seen him few times in the faculty but we didn't get close enough to converse

" I am waiting for my friend, she’d to go and carry her bag from the library” I explained.

We talked that day and before he left he asked for my number which I gave to him, firstly I feel he would be able to help me with past questions, since he's a staylite in my department, secondly he knows a lot of people which will help in my social life since I was planning to be a socialite, lastly he's an executive in my Faculty, these were the reasons why I wasn't reluctant in giving him my number.

After that, we hardly see in the Faculty , people like that are actually busy, but he would message me everyday asking how my day went, how was class, and other questions like that, unknowingly to me , I

didn't even know we were having a talking stage. This guy likes you my friend and course mate -Bolu said after reading through our chats, I had replied negatively saying there was nothing like that, even though deep down in my mind I was hoping he liked me

Bolu words came to reality or should I call it my deepest desire...

" Both" Abdul Rahman interrupted chuckling ,his dimple taking a spot on his cheek.
He was in a good mood for someone who just discovered his wife couldn't give birth

"I'm sorry to interrupt" he apologized immediately seeing the disurbing look on Faizah's face.

"No it's fine ...

I don't know how many weeks we went back and forth, he- trying to impress me and me holding back not to say yes quickly so he wouldn't feel I wanted this the way he want it too
Then exams approached and we went through the first, second and the third one, it was easy not that hard, I had collected a lot of past questions from Saheed ,and luckily for me some questions were repeated, during my fourth paper I forgot my Exam pass at home, it was not possible to enter an Exam Hall without it and I discovered I didn't take it from my house when it was 20 minutes to the paper, I was very scared, and if I should go back to my hostel to look for it , I won't make it back on time, it was foolish to stay back too, since the exam officers wouldn't listen to any complaints so I found myself walking to the school gate, my mind troubled and my eyes wet,with tears that were threatening to fall, I was about to turn to step out, when I heard my name,I didn't want to look back because I was in a hurry but the owner of the voice made me stop
It was him...

Saheed ran towards me, "what's wrong Faizah, I thought your exam is by 9:30, this is 9:10" he said looking at me.

" Thank you for telling me the time ,but please I have to go home for my pass, I forgot it at home " I replied speeding away from him "

" Faizah how did you forget it, that is even a foolish question, go back to the hall,give me one of your roommate's number, I will go home to get it and you should wait for me, just make sure you queue at the back.
*I had gone back to the exam Hall that day with a little bit of faith, two people before it reached my turn, He emerged with my pass, breathing heavily he must have ran while coming to the hall

This was not the first time he has been helping me but this little act of kindness sparked a lot and few days after that He became my boyfriend.

My parent's were Muslims but not that practical like your own parent, so I wasn't that religious and had accepted everything Saheed asked from me, the only thing I didn't give him was my virginity, we had kissed, hugged and allowed him to touch my body in ....

"Skip that part" Abdul Rahman said interrupting again a big frown on his face.
"Oh okay" Faizah replied.

It didn't stay like that for long, I was in 200 level and he was in 500 level at that time, that was the first time we did it, I had attended a night party with him,we got drunk and just did it, without using any protection
*I was not happy at all and had cried that day after seeing what we had done, but he assured me everything was okay and it was normal for us to have had sex

" There's nothing wrong with it, just don't get pregnant this guy is not someone you should let go oo, can't you see the way girls are trying to gain his attention" Bolu said when I told her about what happened. I wasn't surprised she's also a Muslim but her parent don't even practice the religion at all , at least my own parent still managed to pray sometimes and we don't miss Friday prayers.

We went ahead as if nothing happened, even though Saheed wanted us to do it again, I couldn't I was not ready, my conscience wouldn't even allow me, one faithful day after class, I felt sick and the urge to vomit was intense, it continued for the whole day,the next day and the next, it was after class that Bolu dragged me outside,"what?" I asked looking at her you didn't even allow me....

" Faizah I think you are pregnant " she said dropping me off.
" Preg what?? " I asked again even though I heard it clearly the first time.
" *Pregnant!, She repeated

"Oh my God, are you sure" I asked my lips trembling...

Chapter 34

ABDUL-RAHMAN

It's time for solah I said standing up sluggishly.

"Oh okay" Faizah answered nodding her head.

"You can pray at home, I will go and pray at the mosque, I may use that opportunity to check on Nana" I explained to her picking up my car key.

"Okay, help me greet her" Faizah replied fumbling with the hem of her hijab.

Nodding my head, I walked towards the door. "Wait!" Faizah called or maybe I heard it wrongly cause it sounded so small to her usual voice.

"You called me?" I asked turning my head.

"Yeah, about Aisha, tell her I'm sorry for what I said I shouldn't have done that" she explained.

"I can't help you to apologise on behalf of what you have done,it will be better if you do so yourself, she has a big heart, so she doesn't hold grudges" I replied smiling, Faizah nodded seeing that she has nothing to say I rushed out of the house, Not seeing Aishat for hours is so disturbing, I miss the way she looks at me if I laughed. .
"So you can actually laugh,you are not a stone" she had said the first day I laughed so hard when she said something about not going towards the beach because of fishes that would swallow her , that statement was childish and funny at the same time.

"Fishes??" I asked my face coloured with amusement.

"Yes, mum said we shouldn't go close to water, oh my God!, but till now I believe her, that thing looks scary" she replied pointing at the ocean.

"That's what Ummi could possibly say, fishes swallowing you" I chuckled again.

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"That lady should just pray I don't set my eyes on her" Rofiat said frowning as she listened to my narration, one thing about Rofiat, you can't win her during an argument.

"It's actually fine, I haven't set my eyes on her since that day oo, she's staying with Ummi, maybe she will change by then" I said picking a plaintain chip from the plate on the table.

"But you should have told me earlier about all this I would have come to Oshogbo and give her what she deserves, since you said she's living with your mother-in-law now, she must have learnt her lesson."

"Hmm, so you will actually come to Oshogbo??" I asked laughing loudly.
"Yes now!"
"This woman..., you like violence" I said smiling, a knock sounded on the door, before I could even say anything, Salma popped her head in.

"Do you even know there's something called privacy, and if you knock...

"I will wait for you to say come in" she finished my sentence, everything was amusing to Salma.

I opened my mouth to say something again, but Salma beat me to it.

"Leave all the scolding for later, your favourite person is here, though I'm your favourite, but your other favourite person" she rambled on.

" Favourite indeed!, Who are you talking about...Is it Ibrahim??, Abdul Rahman??, Who?? I asked.

"She doesn't even know you?" Salma said closing the door to my room, the person she was talking about was probably standing outside the door.

"Are they properly dressed?" A voice unmistakenly Farid's own asked,from behind the door.

Salma opened the door again, this time I had carried myself away from the bed to go check who it was.

"Oh my God, Farid" I shouted.

"Now she remembers you" Salma turned to him.

Salam alaykum sisters he said smiling a dimple appearing on his face, An image of Abdul-Rahman and his dimple also appearing in my head, I once hated those dimples but now...

"Snap out of it" Salma said wiping a hand over my face, I would still beat this girl one of these days, she's becoming more annoying.

"Wa alaykum Salam, it's definitely Aishat's favourite person." Rofiat replied.

"Who's Aishat's Favourite person?" Abdul-Rahman said entering the room.

"What??, Farid is also here?" He added again, before anyone could answer.

"Me!" Farid declared standing in front of Abdul-Rahman, his face covered with a smile, he was definitely trying to spite him.

"Salam alaykum kid" Abdul- Rahman greeted stretching his height, so Farid could look shorter than him.

"Wa alaykum Salam, Bro Abdul-Rahman" he also replied smirking.

"Oh my, the atmosphere is giving...

I pinched Salma on her wrist, preventing the rest of her sentence from coming out.
"Ouch" she said staring at me.
"Oh... Everyone is here, mom said food is ready" Areef announced walking into the room, not waiting for our reply he walked out again, he must probably be playing games.

Thank God for his interference the look Farid and Abdul-Rahman were giving each other, "let's go and eat" I voiced out walking out of my bedroom.

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I told Saheed about the pregnancy four days later, he knew I was sick so hiding it from him is also not an option Faizah explained.

My phone dinged loudly, a message from Aishat popping in "Do you want ice cream?" She had sent,attaching a picture of 5 hands holding ice cream, one must be for her, Rofiat, Salma, Areef and that annoying kid -Farid.

"what's wrong" Faizah asked, she must have noticed the frown on my face.

"Nothing it's just a text from Aishat,let me send a reply" I said my face still glued to the phone trying to figure out which hand belong to Farid.

Going to Aishat's house, I wanted to talk a little with her, and come back home to listen to continue my conversation with Faizah but seeing Farid there had spoiled my plans, not Rofiat calling her Aishat's favourite person, so annoying. At dinner it was even worse, "Abdul Farid you should eat this, eat this also..." Aishat kept adding fish and meat to his food. She had smiled at him turning to the rest of us who was now blurred to her "He hardly eats food like this in school,Farid doesn't like cooking, he only cook if it's beans."

Then everyone on the table had also encouraged him to eat more, why do Aishat even know the kind of food he eats, I didn't want to leave her parent's house, but I had to come back here since I promised mom and Faizah I would be coming back.

"Have a good night rest, Bro Abdul-Rahman" Farid had shouted why I was leaving I guess he was happy, I and that boy will hardly get along, the way he is too close to my wife, I don't like it at all.

"Where did you see this" I typed back pushing the thoughts of Farid aside.
"Abdul Farid bought it, we went to that supermarket at the other side of our street, thank God they are not closed yet" she sent back.
Of course he bought it
"Okay, enjoy then, keep my own for me" I sent back adding a happy face emoji.

Getting jealous of that young kid is actually childish, he possibly just see Aishat as an elder sister, that's it.
"Faizah,you can continue" I said , putting my phone back in my pocket.

Okay.

when I told him about it,the only reply I got was "Cool let's meet tomorrow in school"
*The next day after my class, I waited for him, he came late actually, cause he asked me to meet him at our faculty pavilion I waited for almost 40 minutes, which was unlike him, by the time he came apologized saying he had a meeting, and it ended late

" I came here immediately after the meeting, we had a trivial issue, so it took a long time to reach an agreement " he explained holding my hands."

*We had talked that day, for more than two hours, I just know I agreed to an abortion, and two weeks later, he took me to an Hospital, where one Doctor named Miss Dolapo, helped with it, it was like he knew the Doctor, the way they discussed like old friends, but I didn't pay much attention to it, since I had a bigger problem if my parent should know I was pregnant I would be in big trouble.

“Don't worry, I'm about to graduate once I secure a good job we don't have to abort any pregnancy again, we would marry and live happily” that was his excuse during my second abortion, the same doctor had done it too.
I should have stopped being intimate with him, but his sweet words always coaxed me and not trying to be alone with him is not even possible I sometimes sleep at his apartment

The third time I got pregnant was few days after his convocation, I had avoided getting pregnant, we used protection, and even his doctor gave me a pill, but it seems God wanted me to see why I should stop whatever I was doing to get pregnant

" Saheed I'm pregnant again" I announced to him, he was sitting on the bed and I was lying down my head on his laps.

" You are pregnant, how can that be,we used protection " he said looking at me strangely.

" *Yes, but it's not my fault, I don't even know how it happens, thank God you are done with school we can actually tell our parent about this one..."

" No Faizah we can't, I don't have a job yet,do you want the child to live in this place " He asked pointing at the one room he was living in

To me, he was right, so like the fool that I was, I aborted the third pregnancy

Chapter 35

"Goal!!!!!!" ...
That was the first statement I heard as I descended the stairs.
"Who in their right senses watch ball early in the morning, I checked the time before leaving my room and it was exactly 6:50am.

Sitting on the sofa facing the TV was Areef, I wasn't surprised, he usually spend his whole day playing games, his partner this time around was Farid,whose attention was glued to the screen, his hand holding the game pad tightly, I guess he was losing.

"Blink twice if you need help Farid" I joked walking into the living room.
Farid turned facing me, his usual smile on his face, when does he even not have that smile, he smile all the time "I'm enjoying this as well, but Areef is whipping me, I don't even have a chance" he replied.

"Can you please focus" Areef beckoned.

"Oh sorry, anyways I'm even losing" Farid said chuckling softly.
Areef played games all the time, he was the only male left in the house, Ibrahim was already in the University when he was born, so he subjected himself to playing games, sometimes he forced Salma to play with him, which would later end in an argument, Salma accusing him of cheating and Areef saying she plays like shit, I always love their brawl sometimes.

"You guys didn't sleep at all?" I asked looking at the TV as Farid scored a goal for the first time since they have been playing.

"Goal!!" He shouted jumping and dropping the pad on the chair.
"We woke up by 5:00, prayed Subhi, I wasn't feeling sleepy so I told Bro Farid, we should play games" Areef replied ignoring Farid childish display of scoring.

"You know this is the first time I actually scored against an expert" he said picking up the pad.

"It's obvious the way you shouted" Areef replied uninterested.
He's becoming more like Ibrahim, blunt replies, acting uninterested and bottling up emotions"

"Yeah, the first time I played this with my coursemates I was beaten, 20-0, they laughed at me that day" he said smiling.
Areef laughed loudly, dropping the pad on the chair, and sitting on the floor, 20-0??, "were you even playing at all, if I was the guy, I would have framed it and hang it in my room"

"To satisfy your ego right?, Farid is not used to playing all this games, you have the privilege to get everything you want, so you should be grateful"

"Would I even have the time to play it, who would even buy the Play station for me, Aunty Morake would have asked if I was going nuts" he replied laughing it off, a kind of pain visible in his words.

"Let me beat your ass again" Areef said, noticing the change in Farid's mood.

"Who's beating whose Ass?" Salma shouted standing at the entrance of the living room yawning loudly.

"None of your business" Areef snapped.
"If it's Areef's ass, count me in" Salma said ignoring Areef and plopping on the sit beside me.

"Can you stop being noisy, you are distracting us?" Areef said.
"I'm not sitting on your head" Salma replied.
Areef turned again facing us , he was about to say something, when the door bell rang.

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Abdul Farid had volunteered to open the door and walking into our living room was Mrs Ahmad, Abdul-Rahman and Faizah.

"Salam alaykum ma" I greeted Ummi, as she pulled me into a hug, Abdul-Rahman exchanged handshakes with Abdul Farid and Areef, while they ignored Faizah.

"You, until I dragged you to my house right?" Ummi said releasing me.
"No oo, Rofiat came to visit and Farid too" I explained‹ as if on clue Rofiat descended the stairs.

"Oh this wonderful girl, come here darling" she said beckoning to Rofiat, who in turn hugged her and did taslim.
After exchanging pleasantries she turned to Areef and Farid "young men "how are you doing?"

"We are fine" They both replied Farid replied smiling.
"Oh my God, you have a dimple too, mashallah" Ummi added excitedly.

"Yes ma" Farid replied still smiling.
"Salam alaykum" Abdul-Rahman greeted whispering into my ears, Ummi walked away from us going upstairs to meet her friend, Rofiat and Salma went back to where I was sitting.

"Get ready to be beaten" Areef teased as he and Farid grabbed their game pad.
"Wa alaykum Salam,see who finally noticed me" I joked trying to ignore the way my heart was beating fast.

"I noticed you immediately I walked in, you are too pretty to be unnoticed" he replied his mouth closer to my ears.
"Please Abdul-Rahman move back a little bit" I replied trying to hide the red colour on my cheeks, being a fair person is not really helping out here.

"He straightened up and walked to my front, I turned my head looking at Faizah sitting on the chair opposite Rofiat's own, Rofiat giving her a death glare, I hope she doesn't break her head.

"I was going to come here alone, until mom insisted on seeing Ummi and you, and Faizah wanted to discuss some things with you, so here we are" he explained.
"Oh okay, do you know what Faizah want to discuss?"

"I don't, but do you know I miss you?" He replied smiling his two holes digging in again, those dimple... I know he did it intentionally, but I don't want to believe Abdul-Rahman can be this romantic.

"Nana!" He called noticing the way I looked at him my mouth sealed.
"Sorry, I was just looking..
"Yeah I know, I'm handsome" he replied interrupting me.

"Oh, here we go again, *the proud peacock that panders to it's gallery*, I read that word from a novel, it was Salma's best novel.... then, she was the kind that love to repeat any exciting word or expression, she learns in a novel or movie.

"You miss me too right..."

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Trying to talk to Aishat alone was very hard, the fact that Rofiat was giving Faizah a disgusting look, if she doesn't like you,she will show it, that was the thing about Rofiat.

But later Faizah had find a way to apologise to her, and Aishat accepted.
Ummi and Aishat's mum had suggested going for a picnic since everyone was at home, so after zhur prayer they had packed enough and extra necessities and drove to one park that was not far away from their house. With the way Aishat and Abdul-Rahman discussed their experiences at the park they must have done picnics there a lot of time.

"Farid and Aishat laughed again, as they won for the third time today"
"You are both cheating" Areef said,while looking at his partner which was Salma, funny how the two could finally cooperate, Rofiat and Abdul-Rahman were on the same team, the game was just giving them Arabic alphabet and they read a Surah or Verse of the Qur'an that start with it. Ummi and Aishat's mom were the one anchoring the game.

After Areef accusation of them cheating, the game ended immediately and Aisha and Farid sat in front of each other discussing what God knows, Salma and Rofiat were also pressing their phones, while Abdul-Rahman stood up to give Farid and Aishat privacy, since they were discussing about Farid's Aunt.

"Heyy, are you okay?" ABDUL-RAHMAN asked standing in front of Faizah, she had excused herself when the game started and sat on one of the swings in the park.

"Yeah she replied."
"Okay" Abdul-Rahman answered still standing, even though Faizah had done a lot in the past few days,he was still sorry for her after her narration, no one deserved what she faced, no female actually deserved it.

"You know I would have understood if you had told me about Saheed earlier"
"I know, I was foolish, you know I believed we were actually going to marry, not knowing that I was not even the only girl that got pregnant for him." Salma replied wiping a tear."

"It's okay, you didn't do anything wrong by loving him, he's the foolish one."

“I'm sorry Abdul-Rahman” she sobbed softly

“*Don't Faizah, come here...*

I would advise you that if you love your self Faizah, you should leave this boy alone, the doctor said, looking at me

But ma ...

I can't abort this one for you, it's getting too much, and I don't want to be arrested and my license taken

Ma please... My parent must not know of this pregnancy, this is the last one I promise

No!!, I can't keep aborting babies every week because, he can't keep himself under control

Aborting babies every week?.... I asked?

Yeah, or do you think you are the only one he's brought here for abortion, I'm doing this because I'm a friend to his elder brother,but it's getting too much

I didn't hear the rest, I rushed out of the hospital my face covered with tears

Chapter 36.

"Hey"

"Heyy?? Farid replied...

After the picnic,they had returned to Mrs Ahmad's house after she had strongly insisted that everyone should come back to her house for dinner.

Once they got home, the ladies went to the kitchen to cook, including Aishat,Faizah and Rofiat,Salma had gone later to join them after calling the boys boring.

What she called boring was them watching a football match. "You are not forced to be here" Areef had replied.

Dinner was served and everyone ate, to the amazement of everybody, Faizah later got the attention of Rofiat, or maybe Rofiat herself discovered that she wasn't actually that bad, or maybe it was just out of pity since Faizah had broke down in tears during the picnic.

"Areef, please pass the fork" Salma asked politely.

"Okay, you should fill your cup with water too" he replied handing over a table water to her.

"What's that?" Aishat asked laughing loudly.
"What's what?, we are eating I don't want her to get choked" Areef replied ignoring the teasing faces everyone was giving him, even Mr Ahmad had laughed along.

"Leave the kids alone, I know how I and my brother got on each other nerves then, but we've always got each other's back" he had added.

After dinner, everyone scattered round the house, discussing and joking playfully except for two young kids- Salma and Areef who had started arguing again.

Abdul Farid was seated on one of the chairs in the compound, his cousin was the one who had called, the last time he had seen him hawking on the street he felt so dejected and had asked Aunty Morake not to allow him do it again, even though there was little he could do, Aisha had come to the rescue again but this time around, Abdul-Rahman had volunteered to help, and now his aunt is owned a baking store, which is growing well

"Hey" Faizah said walking towards him.
"Heyy??" Farid replied.

"I just feel like we should talk" Faizah said sitting beside him.
"About what?, I don't see any reason for us to" he replied his concentration returning back to his phone.

"You look a lot like my aunt..., She was a good person and everyone in the family loved her, so her death was a lot to handle."
Farid shifted uncomfortably looking at Faizah "please I didn't want to have this conversation"

"I'm sorry the way you were left alone, though I was young,after everyone of them blamed your dad for the death of Aunty they realised too late that they were supposed to take care of the only son she left, we looked for you, they did,but I think that time you were living with your Grandma and she had refused to allowed them to see you" Faizah explained.

"Please,what am I supposed to gain from all the things you have said , you all, everyone in your family don't have the right to talk to me, my dad was not rich but we never begged,do you know the kind of pain I felt when they died, I was down, I had no one, we had no one, Dad was like the pillar holding our family and when he left everything went down with him... Farid paused trying to... hold his emotions.

"I'm sorry, her death shocked everyone then, it...

"Grandma died after, she died of stress, she died of stress, with her old age she would work on the farm so I could go to school while you all sit in the comfort of your homes spending the money Allah gave to you"

"Do you know what I could have resorted too because I had no one, I could have start stealing or smoking or even turn bad, Alhamdulillah I didn't, but I was close to it, should I remind you of days I didn't have anything to eat, I don't know what Family is, but looking at Sister Aishat's own, family are supposed to be there for each other in time of need, I won't accept your apology, the person who needed it is long gone, and you are not the one to apologise, it's neither your fault nor mine, stay away from me, I only see you as my sister's co wife, and the wife to Bro Abdul-Rahman, I have only one family now and that's sister Aishat's own, and I beg you in the name of Allah, don't hurt my sister you make my sister cry, I will make you hate me."

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Faizah left the hospital in tears, Saheed's apartment was not far from the hospital so she had went there immediately

Faizah stood frozen looking at Saheed who was walking out of his room, holding a girl's hand, she had recognized the girl to be one of the students in 100 level, when Saheed was still in 400 level then

Faizah, what happened, you are supposed to come late from the hospital, you...
"Are you sure there's nothing wrong with your brain" Faizah asked, while Saheed looked too calm for someone who was caught cheating.

"My brain or your brain?, Have you removed the thing, and why are you early"

"Are you for real, so this is how you have been doing deceiving girls like me and just, spoiling their life "

"Who spoilt your life,did I force you to abort the pregnancy,did I asked you to open your legs for me, go and abort that thing, it's even none of my business I'm not responsible for it anymore" he replied, holding the girl's hand tightly.

"Saheed, are you being serious,you caused all of this,I should have stayed away from you" Faizah replied a new tear slipping from her eye.

"I would have loved to chitchat but I have somewhere to go." He replied walking away leaving her standing.

Few days later, Saheed left his apartment, it was initially that everyone discovered he left the country and that was when everything went loose, he was dating more than 30 girls in the faculty, he even lied to some that he didn't want anyone to know they are dating, so it would last, 5 already discovered they were pregnant and those who weren't had to do a pregnancy test to actually confirm,the faculty went wild with different rumours, Faizah was dejected she couldn't even bring herself to tell anyone and her friend Bolu had suggested she abort the pregnancy, she couldn't do it herself and they they had gone to see another Doctor.

Miss Faizah, you have done lot of abortion within three years and unfortunately this one could cause the damage of your womb, so if we go on with it to prevent any complications we need to remove the womb. - The Doctor had explained.

Like you would remove and I won't be able to give birth Faizah asked turning pale.

Yes...

Ahh!!! ,what have I gotten myself into.

CHAPTER 37

"Oh my God, I'm going to miss you" Mrs Ahmad said hugging Faizah.
"I will miss you too mum, thank you for your advice, I actually learnt a lot" Salma replied hugging her back.

Faizah, well she wasn't bad as I thought, it's one thing to watch your husband marry another lady, and it's another thing for the whole family to like her more, I understand her, she felt inferior to me, but I think now she knows, Abdul-Rahman and Ummu love her.

"You" Mrs Ahmad said pulling me out of my thoughts.
"Ummu, I will miss you too" I whined putting my two hands on her shoulder.
"You will miss me, the one week you used here, how many times have you come to visit me?"

"I was here on Tuesday when we had picnic and on... "I paused trying to think.

"On what??,if not because your husband won't allow me, you are supposed to stay here for another week" Mrs Ahmad replied.

Abdul-Rahman closed the boot of the car smiling , "you can't keep my wife with you, you have your husband nah" he joked putting his hand over his mom's shoulder.
"You have to tell me, I don't know I have, you should all start going, let me call Maryam self, thank God I have a friend and a husband" Ummi replied pushing Abdul-Rahman's hand away playfully.

"Ummu, you know we can visit anytime though, but Abdul-Rahman needs to go to work. Faizah replied.
"I know, May Almighty Allah bless the three of you, Aishat and Faizah, please live in harmony, you both should not allow shaytan to use you, the next time I'm coming to visit you it's to celebrate the birth of a baby by God's grace"

"Amin" we all answered in unison.

"Also if this boy is stressing you" she said gripping her son's hand, report him to me.
"Mummy, remember I'm your only son,you are supposed to be on my side"

"I know, go and start the car,let me have a little discussion with your wives" Ummu replied.
"Alhamdulillah I have two Ummus" he grumbled opening the car door.

"Jealous man" Mrs Ahmad uttered, earning a laugh from both I and Faizah.

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"Mr Adelana, you are next" the secretary called, Kamal adjusted his tie, putting his hand into his pocket he followed the secretary into the room where the interview was taking place.

"Good evening" Kamal greeted.

"Good evening, Mr Adelana, I went through your CV and it's actually nice to see you got a job immediately after you graduated and it was in a big company to be precise" The fat woman sitting at the right side of the table stated.

"Yes ma, Scribe is a very big company and I was happy to work with them" Kamal replied cleaning his sweaty palm on his trousers, this is the 13th Job interview he has attended and everyone of them had rejected him for the same reason.

"If you worked in that kind of company, I have a cousin there ,so I know they are well paid, why did you leave?, And you were even the General manager" one of the interviewer asked again, he was a man in his late 50s he stared at Kamal with suspicious eyes.

"I was sacked" Kamal replied, there was no point in lying, even if he told them he resigned they wouldn't believe and still make their findings.

"Oh, I see" the woman said.

"Ehn,you know what?" We will get back to you, you can leave. The man said.

Kamal stood up, bowing his head in courtesy he left knowing he wouldn't be able to get this one too.

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"I will do it" Faizah said folding a top and dropping it in her luggage.
"Are you crazy??, Do what?, You heard what the doctor said, if you do it, you can't get pregnant again" Bolu replied.

"I can't keep this child, my parent would kill me, and also the father has ran away,the best thing to do is abort it, I have learnt my lesson and I learnt it the hard way." She replied wiping a tear from her eye.

"Faizah ..." Bolu called hugging her as she continued to cry .

.... Faizah!, Faizah!, Faizah!
"Are you sleeping or you are awake" Abdul-Rahman asked tapping her.

"I was sleeping, did something happen?, She asked touching her face it was wet"
"You were crying, are you thinking about it again?" Abdul-Rahman asked touching her face.

"I was reading and I slept off, I wasn't thinking about it, it was more like a dream" she replied.
"It's okay, we just got back, Aisha is fine, that's what the doctor said, you should have followed us instead of sitting at home alone"

"What did the doctor say, she looked so pale this morning, Alhamdulillah there's nothing wrong with her" Faizah replied sitting up straightly.

"He said she's fine, he gave her some drugs, she's in her room, I followed her there before coming here" Abdul-Rahman said.
"Let me go and see her then, I was so worried" Faizah replied rushing to the door.

"Ehm Uhm!!" Abdul-Rahman cleared his throat.
"What?" Faizah turned looking at him trying to hide a smile.
"Wash your face before going" he said still smiling.

"Oh I should" she replied rushing into the bathroom.
"Abdul-Rahman!!!" She shouted from the bathroom looking at her face in the mirror.

"It's not that bad" Abdul-Rahman replied back from the bedroom.
"Yes it is, I saw you trying to laugh, I can't believe my eyes look so bulgy I only slept for one hour" she replied using a tissue to wipe her face.

"Yeah you did, and I met you on the bed snoring loudly" Abdul-Rahman replied laughing.

"I wasn't snoring,I don't snore" she argued.
"Yeah but your mouth was wide opened and....

"Just wait for me , I'm coming" she said running out of the bathroom, the same time Abdul-Rahman rushed out of the bedroom.

CHAPTER 38

"Mummy I'm going out" Kamal said dressed in a polo and a blue coloured Jean.

"Early this morning, won't you eat, I cooked beans yesterday why don't you warm it" Mrs Adelana replied.

"No don't worry, I think Toheeb already ate it before going to school, I got a work at the site today they would give me 10k for just working with them today" he replied smiling.

"OLORUN!!!,. Is this how you would keep looking at me" Mrs Adelana lamented holding her head.

"Mummy please don't even start, you are supposed to keep praying for us, it has turned to this, I know everything would be back to normal, I Sha won't steal , that 10k ehn, don't you know we can cook something good with it ,at least you can buy fish we won't eat ponmo today again." He said holding her.

"I have heard you, go safely, I pray it gets better for us" she replied wiping her face.

"Amin ma, I'm not carrying the car, cause they won't believe I need money I will just take bike." He replied walking out of the house.

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"Brother, Salam alaykum" .

"Wa alaykum Salam brother, this one you called today" Abdul-Rahman joked from the other end.

"You know I have been busy, work, wife , and I have a son now " Ibrahim replied.

"True, but you sha don't have an excuse for not calling me, it's been long we talk, we need to see each other soon." Abdul-Rahman said.
"Yeah I know, I'm even in Oyo by the way, that new building, for Agro tech, my company got the contract, we started working at the site today" Ibrahim explained.

"Mashallah, that's good to hear, that's a big one ooo, we need to celebrate, I was going to call you, after leaving work, I wanted to share something with you."

"What's that, is everybody okay at home?" Ibrahim asked walking away from where the workers were mixing cement.

"Yeah, Aisha is pregnant, we knew just yesterday, she was not feeling well so when we got to the hospital the test result showed she was pregnant"

"Oh my God!!, Alhamdulillah, that's good news, I'm so happy for you both, my brother and my sister having a baby, she must have been really happy, I will call her once I drop this call, Alhamdulillah, Congratulations" Ibrahim exclaimed happily.

"Thank you, I'm going to call mum and dad too, they will be happy to hear the news"

"Actually, happy is an understatement they will be...."

Ibrahim paused looking at the lead-labourer dragging a man, they were arguing and it looked as if a fight would take place.

"What's that noise?" Abdul-Rahman asked.

"It's the labourers they looked as if they are about to fight, let me call you later" Ibrahim said, hanging up the call he rushed to the scene.

"What's happening here" he asked looking at the man kneeling on the floor his head bended.

"Sir ,he was supposed to come work for us today, and he came late, I told him we would remove from the money he's suppose to collect,then he knelt down and started begging me, I advised him to go home if it's too small for him but he won't listen he just keep begging, I'm trying to drag him away from here" the lead- labourer explained.

"Excuse me, can you look at me" Ibrahim said.

"Sir, I'm sorry, there was traffic I had to later come here on foot" Kamal explained raising his head.

"Subhanallah Kamal!!!" Ibrahim exclaimed looking surprised.

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"Aisha, you can't carry that it's too heavy " Faizah said collecting the bag of semo from me.
"I can, it's not that heavy" I replied.

"You know your condition,you shouldn't stress yourself, let me take this to the car, sit down here" she said walking away.

We had both decided to come to the market today to buy some foodstuffs, and it was as if I was only here for sightseeing, she won't allow me to carry anything.
"Your sister is nice oo" the woman selling the stuffs she took to the car said.

"Yes ma, she just doesn't like it when I stress my self" I replied adjusting my hijab.

"That's very nice of her" she turned slowly to attend to a customer who just arrived.

"Ma please bring, two kegs of palm oil" she said raising her head from her phone.
"Bimpe" I called standing up.

"Aishat, oh my God!" She shouted rushing to hug me.

"What are you doing here, sorry this is a market, why are you in Oshogbo?" Bimpe asked.
"I should ask you the same question too, my husband stays in Oshogbo, I have been living here for almost a year now" I replied touching her hand.

"You still look so beautiful, I didn't know you got married oo, congratulations "

"Thank you, but you look different, you have lost a lot of weight, that's nice you even look better in this shape" I commended she was dressed in a flowy pleated gown reaching her knee.

"I know right, after leaving Lagos, I got a job here at Oshogbo, oh my God, I actually worked on my body, it's a lot but it's worth it" she replied turning slowly.
"Yeah I can see that, it's been long oo, I'm happy you are doing well"

"All thanks to God, I'm sorry for what I said the last time we met, I actually tried to reach you, but your number was saying switched off"
"It's fine, I changed my number, I ...

"Aisha" Faizah called interrupting her.
"I ran into my friend, we lost contact it's been long I have seen her, Faizah meet b Bimpe, Bimpe this is Faizah"

"Good afternoon sis, nice to meet you, you look good by the way" Bimpe said smiling heavily.
"Nice to meet you too darling, thank you, you also look great" Faizah replied smiling

"I think you should give me your number, I will call you, we can talk and meet up later" Bimpe said handing over her phone to me.

CHAPTER 39

"Good afternoon" Farid greeted walking into Aunt Morake's baking store.

"Farid!, How are you?, I'm sorry I called you impromptu, but there's someone who want to see you so badly" she said patting his shoulder.

"Me??!, I only know few people here in Lagos and why would would they even want to meet me through you, I have a phone" He replied pulling it out of his pocket.

"I know you do, just come in" she said as he followed her silently.

Sitting in the small sofa which was placed in aunt Morake's office were three people, he recognized one of them as Faizah's dad, the other two he hasn't met them before.

"Wait ,you called me here to meet this people, No Aunt Morake you shouldn't have done that,you know how they treated me when my parent died, why are they coming now to ask for forgiveness" Farid uttered angrily, turning to walk away.

"Please Farid, you can't continue living like this, they are your family whether you like it or not" Aunt Morake explained.

"How much did they give you?" Farid asked.

"Huh?"

"Yes how much did they give you, they must have bribed you with money, since that's what you love the most, I can't believe this, they accused your dead brother of killing their sister,they abandoned me, I once slept in a cell, if they had helped that time,all these would not have happened."

"Do you think so little of me, why would I accept money from them, I hate them as much as you do, but what can I do, I'm trying not to allow anyone to have regret later, do I also have the right to criticize them, I maltreated you too,I didn't treat you well, I'm trying to make it up to you, by being there for you now, I'm not asking you to see them everyday just forgive and forget"

"It's that easy for you, but for me I don't think so" Farid replied hissing loudly.

"Even Allah forgives if we do wrong so who are you" Aishat said her voice hitting the four corners of the room.

"Sister Aishat..." Farid said looking at the phone Aunt Morake was holding.

"Did you call her" he added looking at her.
"No she didn't,I decided to talk to you myself, Faizah told me her dad was coming to visit you today with some family members, I know you are stubborn, so I had to beg Aunt Morake to call me once you were there.

"Oh my God" Abdul Farid said.

"Think of this way, would you have possibly met me, if all of this didn't happen, everything happens for a reason, no matter what, it later become favourable to us, would you judge your family for what they did, even though it later became a blessing for you, Even Allah forgives if we sin, so why not do that."

"I know, but life was hard I had it hard " Abdul Farid replied sobbing softly.

"I'm sorry Farid, but we are ready to make it up to you, we acted foolishly, the death of our sister hit us differently"

"Abdul Farid, I know, I heard your story and I cried and even forgot to eat my pepper soup" Aisha chuckled.

"Was the pepper soup part necessary?" Farid asked laughing.

"Yeah, I don't want you crying like a baby, do you remember what I said that day"

"You said I won't ever have any reason to cry again"
"Yeah, so why don't you stop crying, and be the reason why some people believe in forgiveness"

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"Thank you, for inviting me here today and for the other day too" Kamal greeted taking a seat.

"To be honest, I don't like you, and I don't hate you either, seeing you at the site that day I think Allah wanted me to help you, I can't say I will ever forgive you for what you did to Aisha, but it's fine that's not why we are here" Ibrahim replied.

"Thank you, I'm willing to apologise to Aisha but I think that's not possible,since you won't allow me to see her, but I keep asking God for forgiveness everyday, and I think I have seen the repercussions of what I did, I'm a bad person and I don't even deserve your help, thank you for the last time, I really appreciate, have a nice day." Kamal said standing up.

"You can leave, but this is my friend's number, he's currently relocating abroad and he needs someone to take over his company for him, I recommended you to him, you can either call him or forget about it, Allah knows I have tried my best, Ma Salam " Ibrahim said walking away.

"Thank you brother Ibrahim I would never forget your kindness, thank you so much" Kamal shouted wiping a tear from his eyes, ignoring people stares he picked up the business card and also walked out.

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Faizah

My womb was removed successfully, how did I get the money, I lied to my parent, telling them we had a project in school, they had the money so they didn't bother to make findings about whether I was lying or saying the truth.

I was in my hostel for two weeks, crying and just sitting there, it affected my result for that semester.

The time I saw Saheed again, I just finished NYSC , and he didn't had it little like others, he was displaying madness on the street of Lagos, he was mad, I later heard that he did drugs and was deported after returning back to Nigeria he didn't had any remorse he continued taking drugs , and at last he ran

mad, I should have been happy when I saw him, I should have been like "good for you" but I felt bad, I felt bad for him, his parents and other people who looked up to him.

This is the thing about humans , some of us have the opportunity to repent, and ask God for forgiveness but for some they don’t ...

CHAPTER 40

FINAL CHAPTER

I gave birth in March, everyone was happy, Abdul-Rahman and Ummu couldn't contain their happiness they kept treating the babies as if they were gold, I gave birth to twins - Abdul Farid and Faridah , Farid couldn't stop whining about the fact that my first born has his name.

Faizah was happy, she took care of the twins as if they were her babies, I would even ask her to hold one of them while I breastfeed the other, she loved babies, we feed them together, bath for them together, I didn't want to leave any space for her to get sad, so everything regarding the twins I carried her along.

Ibrahim was getting ready for their second child, this time around it was a girl and both couples looked happy and prepared to have her.

Bimpe got married late June, the event was beyond words, I attended her wedding she invited Rofiat too and I think it's high time that girl get married, she's getting comfortable being single - Lol.

Abdul Farid, reconciled with his mom's family and they all meet once in every three months for a family hangout, two more years and he's finally done with University he's getting taller everyday, and keeps calling my son his mini self.

Kamal !!!, I think he learnt his lesson the hard way, I don't know what happened to him, Bro Ibrahim and Abdul-Rahman won't tell me, but I met him during one of the official events they had and it's funny he's now working in one of my brother friend’s company,

he respects my him a lot, though we didn't talk for up to one minute, before my over protective husband came to take me away.

Aunty Morake is doing well in her baking store, she's planning on opening another branch in Oyo, happily ever after right??.

Salma and Areef, Salma is now in the University, studying Medicine,. A science student who writes , well that's Salma, she just published her first book,and it's actually romance she didn't disappoint me, I'm just on the third page of the book, and I'm wondering if I'm reading the story of my life, I don't trust that girl.

Areef is in the second year of his senior school, and oh my God,Bro is taking his tech stuff very seriously, did he still play games, well yeah he still does.

I'm grateful for everything Allah has done for me, for my family and for my friends, I'm happy despite everything we still managed to stay together as one.

I'M AISHAT AND THIS IS MY STORY

About the Author

Zaynab Ashiru, also known by her pen name Zaynab Writes, is a romance author, creative catalyst, and writing coach dedicated to telling captivating stories and helping other writers find their voice. As the founder of The Writer's Link (TWL), she fosters a vibrant community for creatives to grow and thrive. When she isn't weaving tales of love and self-discovery or coaching fellow writers, Zainab is navigating her studies as a law student at Lagos State University.

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